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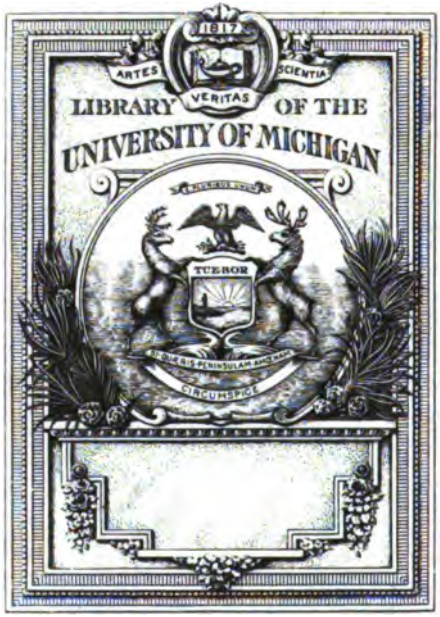

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The Works of

CHARLES PAUL DE KOCK

With a General Introduction by

JULES CLARETIE

FRERE JACQUES

Translated into English by

MARY HANFORD FORD

VOLUME I

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CHAPTER I

A Wedding at the Cadran Bleu. The Murville Family

The hour of midnight is approaching. Whence come these cries of joy, these outbursts, this hubbub, this music, these songs, this noise? Will you not pause, oh, reader! for a little moment or so upon the boulevard, before the Cadran Bleu. Will you not follow the example of all these good people who are spectators at all the wedding festivities, at all the banquets which are given at the restaurants of the Boulevard du Temple? Will you not walk before the windows and on the causeway and enjoy the dazzling perspective of an English chain, the whirl of a waltz or of a "crême au chocolat"? At the risk, remember, of being elbowed by the passers-by, spattered with mud from the carriages, or insulted by the coachmen.

By midnight, or shortly thereafter, all these loungers, these idlers, these loiterers or whatever you are pleased to term them, will have returned to their homes,—will have disappeared, at any rate, from the scene of action, and there will only remain the cabs and the carriages which are waiting before the Cadran Bleu to take the pleasure-

seekers to their various domiciles. This is the hour at which the scene within this celebrated resort is likely to become more piquant, more varied, and more lively. The evening is really beginning.

Do you not wish to learn the reason of this assemblage at the Cadran Bleu. Is it a fête? the celebration of an anniversary? or, perchance, the banquet of a regiment? It is vastly more important than any of the things I have mentioned: it is a wedding.

A wedding! how many reflections does this word inspire! To how many thoughts, hopes, and memories, grave or gay, does it give birth!

How delightfully it agitates the untried heart of the young girl, who sighs for the happy moment when she shall be the admired heroine of a like occasion, when she will carry the pretty white bridal bouquet and wear the flowing veil of lace, and the wreath of orange flowers, those odorous emblems of virginal purity. How melancholy, on the contrary, is the aspect of this ceremony for the young woman who has been married for only a few short years, but whose only knowledge of happiness is the memory of a too-fleeting felicity, vanished never to return. She trembles for the fate of the poor little thing who is entering this state; she remembers the day of her own marriage; she compares this day with those which have followed, and knows what confidence one should grant to the oaths of men.

But let us drop these reflections, enter the Cadran Bleu, and make acquaintance with the principal personages of this assembly, whom probably we shall have occasion to meet again during the course of this history, even if this chapter has nothing to do with the action of our story, which is quite possible. It can be read with that understanding.

Let us begin with the newly married couple.

Edouard Murville was twenty-five years old. He was of medium height, but well built, his face attractive, his voice sweet, his manners distinguished; he had some social talents, played the violin tolerably well, sang with taste, danced gracefully, had a refined enunciation, and was accustomed to society; knew how to enter and leave the drawing-room; and this, it might be said, in passing, is not so easy as one might think. "The idea!" I seem to hear my reader say. "Does this man suppose that we do not know how to walk, to bow, and to present ourselves properly?" I do not make such criticisms upon the people who are the best dancers, but there are degrees in everything; it is upon these degrees that I base my observations. A woman who was very witty, but a trifle sarcastic, beside whom I was seated recently in the drawing-room of a financier, made these remarks to me, which in general are very true.

"Come now," she said to me; "study with me the people who are entering this drawing-room;

I wager it is possible to divine their character, their temperament, by the manner in which they present themselves. Observe this tall lady, who is passing through the crowd without deigning to honor it with an inclination of her head; there, she has seated herself before the fireplace, putting her feet on the fender, and settling herself in the best place, without looking to see if she is inconveniencing the people who are sitting behind her. What do you think of this woman?"

"That she has a great many airs, and thinks constantly of showing her fine toilet."

"That is not all. Add that she is stupid. A clever woman has a thousand ways of attracting notice to herself without assuming ridiculous airs; and, if she wishes to shine, she at least knows how to do it with more art, and does not glance disdainfully at persons whose garments are somewhat old-fashioned, or whose dress is a little negligent. But, listen! What a noise there is in the next room! Has some distinguished person arrived? Is a tea-table overturned? The master of the house runs in. We shall soon know what it is. Ah, I recognize that voice; it is Monsieur J. Wait! listen! You can easily hear everything from this spot."

"Ah, my dear friends, I am sorry to be so late. 'Pon my honor, I am all upset; I do not know whether I ought to come in; my dress is all in disorder. I should like to hide myself in a corner."

"Well," said my neighbor to me, "what do you think of this gentleman who does not wish to be seen, and who is shouting in such a fashion as to make all the heads in the drawing-room turn to look at him? Ah, he has decided at last."

I expected to see a heedless young fellow enter, but I saw, instead, a man between forty and fifty, who wore a blond wig, and bowed from right to left, smiling as agreeably as possible.

"Who is this gentleman?" said I to my neighbor.

"It is Monsieur J.; he is the universal man. He knows all Paris; he is in all the circles, especially the musical ones. He plays three or four instruments; there is not an amateur concert in which he does not take part; but, also, he has not the acquaintance of a single artist. You may imagine, from the manner of his entrance into this drawing-room, that his delight is to make a sensation. I do not draw from that a favorable augury as to his talent, for you know merit is not accustomed to advertise itself. Mediocrity, on the contrary, is noisy, puts itself forward, wishes to invade everything, and always succeeds in impressing the thoughtless crowd.

"But I see a new face; it is a young man. He at least makes no noise. He enters so quietly that he is scarcely heard; he gives a half-bow, and remains standing by the door. He glides along the wall, and at last has found a chair, upon which he

places himself quickly, and from which I guarantee he will not move during the entire evening. Poor boy! He twists his mouth, winks his eyes, does not know what to do with his hands. I wager he believes that all the women are looking at him and thinking of him. As a rule, I have observed that timidity and awkwardness often arise from an excess of self-consciousness. The fear of appearing ridiculous, or of not having a sufficiently attractive manner, gives that embarrassment to the bearing and that comical expression to the face. If you wish to be convinced of this, when you go to the theatre study some young actors in their first rôles, who are not bad, and who, perhaps, would play well, were they not so entirely occupied with their hair, their cravat, their pose, and the effect which they suppose their face is making upon the audience."

My neighbor continued her observations, and I, reader, would gladly share them with you if I did not remember that it is not to hear me converse with her, but to learn the adventures of Frere Jacques, that you have opened this volume. A thousand pardons! I have escorted you to the home of a financier; I will return to the Cadran Bleu.

You now know that the wedding of Edouard Murville was being celebrated there, that the bridegroom was twenty-five years old, and had a fine figure; but you do not yet know his wife. I has-

ten to repair this oversight, for she is beautiful, sweet, good and wise; you cannot make her acquaintance too soon.

Adeline Germeuil had reached the charming age of eighteen and possessed all those attractions of mind and person which inspire love at first sight and retain the affection afterward. In the first place she had beautiful eyes, fine teeth, a graceful figure and a fresh complexion; in the second place, her qualities of mind, of far greater importance than the fleeting charms of personal beauty, were wit without sarcasm, gayety without coquetry, affability without affectation, and modesty without timidity. She knew she was beautiful; but did not think all men should do homage to her because of it; she was fond of pleasure, but did not occupy herself with it to the exclusion of other objects or duties. One may easily imagine that she was a woman whom it was very agreeable to meet, especially if one were a bachelor.

Adeline loved Edouard, preferring him to many more eligible suitors, for Edouard had no other means than those accruing from the position he held in a goverment office, while Adeline's income was somewhere in the neighborhood of fifteen thousand livres a year. But Mademoiselle Germeuil was not ambitious; she believed that happiness lay in the gratification of one's heart, and not in the possession of more or less money. Besides, one may live comfortably on an income of

fifteen thousand livres, especially when married to a man who is economical and understands how to manage his household. Murville certainly appeared to be such a man; he had all the necessary qualities, for he pleased. Mademoiselle Germeuil had no family but her mother, an estimable woman who loved her daughter, and had no desire to oppose her inclinations. She was, however, solicitous for the future happiness of her daughter, and, when she perceived Adeline's love for Edouard Murville, she hastened to inform herself as to the moral character of the young man, and as to his family.

She learned that he was born of people in easy circumstances, that his father had followed the honorable calling of a barrister, but that serious financial losses had reduced the Murville family's resources to an income barely sufficient for their needs. M. Murville had but two children, Edouard and Jacques, the latter of whom was a year younger than his brother; but the mother did not divide her love equally between her two sons, of whom Edouard was the favorite. An apparently trivial circumstance had influenced the partiality of Madame Murville; having little wit and much vanity, she held tenaciously to all the trifling and puerile usages which are of so much consequence in society. Before the birth of her first child, she perplexed her brain in choosing a name for the coming little one, which should be at once

fashionable, sweet and distinguished; and at last she fixed upon the name of Edouard, if it should prove a boy, and that of Celenie, if a girl should be born to her.

The first-born was a boy, who received the name of Edouard, and had all his mother's love. When she again became conscious of the happy hope of motherhood, she did not for a moment doubt that a pretty little Celenie would come to reward her waiting; the birth of a daughter would have placed her at the summit of her happiness; but she again brought a son into the world.

One may imagine that the second was not so well received as was the first; besides, a boy had not been expected, and they had not decided what name he should bear. But this time deliberations on that point would have proved superfluous, for M. Murville announced that he had a friend who wished to be godfather to his son. The family were under some obligation to this friend, who was very rich, and could not well refuse his offer; he held the child at the font, and, to Madame Murville's great mortification, he gave him the name of Jacques. Though Jacques may be as good a name as any, it is not euphonious, and it wounded the delicate ear of Madame Murville, who declared it to be fit only for a lackey, a chimney-sweep or a messenger boy; she was ashamed to address her son by it. In vain her husband tried to make her hear reason, reminding her how

many royal Jacques had sat upon the Scottish throne; Madame Murville could not pronounce the name without sighing.

There was no possibility of changing it, for the godfather, who was himself called Jacques, came frequently to see his godson and would have been very much shocked had the boy been called otherwise. The youngster remained Jacques, therefore, to the great disgust of Madame Murville. As to Edouard, whether from mischief on his part or whether he really liked his brother's name, he called "Frere Jacques" at every moment of the day; and when he had been guilty of any naughtiness, he put it on this same Frere Jacques' back.

The two brothers were entirely opposite in character. Edouard was sedate, clever and tractable, willing to pass the day seated near his mother. Jacques was boisterous, noisy and intractable, could never remain in one place, and, wherever he was, turned everything upside down.

Edouard learned easily all that was taught him; Jacques threw his books and pens into the fire, preferring to roll his hoop or manufacture wooden swords.

At the age of sixteen, Edouard went into society with his parents, having already learned the art of listening to a conversation and of smiling agreeably at a pretty woman.

At fifteen Jacques left the paternal roof; he disappeared without leaving any writing or other

indication by which his parents could discover his plans or his destination. Every possible search was made for him without avail; notices were put in the papers, in the hope that he would see them; but no news of him was ever received. M. Murville was deeply grieved by the flight of his madcap; and even Madame Murville felt that she was a mother, and that one might even be called Jacques and still be her son. She repented her unjust partiality, and reproached herself when it was too late. The unfortunate name had produced its effect; it had closed to the boy his mother's heart, and had exposed him to his brother's jest; and perhaps these things had combined to drive him far from his parents' home. There are many unaccountable rebounds in our lives.

"I caught the measles lately," said a young man to me yesterday, "because a shoemaker employed by one of my friends broke his glasses."

"What connection," inquired I of him, "can there be between your measles and a shoemaker's glasses?"

"It was thus, my dear: This lady had made an appointment to meet me that evening at the house of one of our acquaintances, where we were to have some music. But in the morning she was waiting for some pretty cherry-colored shoes to wear with a dress of the same tint. The shoemaker, who had broken his glasses on the day that he took her measure, brought her some

charming shoes, but they were too small. She could not resist the desire to try them on; they pinched a great deal, but the shoemaker assured her that they would stretch in walking. Ladies love to have small feet. This one went out, limping a little. She reached the boulevard, and, in the presence of some persons of our acquaintance, she forced herself to walk lightly; but her feet became heated, swollen; she suffered horribly, and was forced to return home. When she arrived there she threw aside the cursed shoes and examined her feet, which were wounded and hurt. It would not be possible for her to go out for a week. As for me, I knew nothing of all that, and I went to our rendezvous, expecting to hear some music. I did not meet my friend; the mistress of the house was alone; she was very pleasant, but she was forty years old. The time seemed long to me; I was impatient, and, after waiting for an hour in vain, I left, not knowing where I should go. I came to a theatre, which I entered mechanically and only to kill time, for I know the plays by heart. I noticed a pretty little minx, and, approaching her from force of habit, I addressed a few words to her; she answered me; she seemed to like to chat, and as for me, I was glad to find an opportunity for a little amusement. At last the play ended, and I offered my arm to my pretty chatterer, who refused at first, but presently accepted. I led away my lovely conquest,

and I did not leave her until I had obtained permission to show her some attention later on. I did not miss an appointment with her the next day; in fact, I became her intimate friend, and in one of my visits I caught the measles, from which she was suffering, though I did not suspect it. So you see if the shoemaker had not broken his glasses, all that would not have happened."

My young friend was right; the greatest events often result from the most simple diversions, the most insignificant circumstances. As to my hero, there is no doubt that his baptismal name influenced his entire destiny. How many people have had the splendor of a famous name which has been transmitted to them from their ancestors, and in this way have received a consideration which never would have been granted to them personally! Happy the man who knows how to make his own name illustrious, and transmit it with glory to posterity; but happier still, perhaps, he who lives an obscure life, and whose name excites neither envy nor hatred.

But you now know the Murville family, and it only remains for me to tell you of the death of Edouard's parents, of whom one did not long survive the other. They regretted deeply that they knew nothing as to the whereabouts of their son Jacques, and they charged Edouard, should he ever return, to tell him that they forgave his desertion of them.

Edouard was now master of his own actions; he was twenty-two years old, had a salary of two thousand francs, and could live with decency if he conducted himself well. He loved pleasure; but society, music, the theatres, offered him this at small cost; he did not dream of gaming. He wooed fair women, but as he was not evil-minded he did not complain of their severity; he was easily led, and lacked strength of character; but, happily for him, he did not form any evil associations. In short, while one could not cite him as a model to be followed, nobody could say he had any great faults.

Madame Germeuil was easily persuaded to give her Adeline to Edouard Murville.

"This young man will make my daughter happy," she said; "he has not much decision, but then my daughter will be the mistress, and the homes where women are in the ascendency are always the best managed."

All this explains why there was a wedding at the Cadran Bleu.

CHAPTER II

Great Events Caused by a Jig and a Snuffbox. Dufresne

"How pretty she is! — so well built, so graceful, so blooming," said all the young men among themselves, and even the papas made similar remarks, as they watched the movements of the bride in the dance. "How fortunate Edouard is!" was the opinion everywhere expressed.

Edouard heard it; he was, in fact, as happy as one can be who is on the point of becoming entirely so. To hide his impatience to be with her who was now his lawfully wedded wife, he skipped and danced and did not remain for a moment in one place. The festivity of a wedding is a joyous occasion, yet the young husband finds it almost wearisome, because it is to be followed by that sweet seclusion and union with his bride, which to the ardent lover brings greater joy than anything the dance can offer, or the pleasant society of friends.

"The bridegroom seems very much in love," said all the married ladies. The young ones did not say so, but they thought it.

"Ah, Monsieur Volenville! it was thus that

you looked at me twenty-two years ago," said sighingly to her husband a lady of between forty and fifty, who was overloaded with rouge, ribbons and laces, and who, seated in a corner of the ball-room, had waited vainly since dinner for a partner to lead her to the dance. M. Volenville, formerly chief financier of the Sceaux balls, and now an auctioneer and appraiser in the Marais, did not reply to his wife, but took a pinch of snuff and went into an adjoining room to look on at a game of écarté.

Madame Volenville, quite in a pet, changed her position, as she had done several times before. She placed herself between two young persons, hoping, apparently, that an invitation would come to include the group, and that she would thus get upon the floor. But her attempt was apparently in vain. She saw a young man approaching, she poised her head gracefully, she smiled, and advanced her foot, which was a pretty one. He approached, but, sad to relate, invited the young lady upon her left or her right, and paid no attention to her glances or to her pretty foot.

It is extremely disagreeable to remain a wall-flower, and Madame Volenville, not knowing any other means of attracting a partner, considered if it were worth while to display her well-rounded calf; her leg had already done marvels for her; she must try its power of attraction, since the foot had failed in its effect.

Madame Volenville made her decision, and presently the edge of the calf appeared as decently as possible. At that moment there was a great cry for a fourth couple to make up a quadrille. There were no more dancers. The larger portion had gone home, and the remainder were on the floor. A young man who was much curled and perfumed looked eagerly about the room, spied the auctioneer's wife, and, deciding that she was the one to help them out of their difficulty, he came toward her and asked her to dance.

Madame Volenville did not give the young man time to finish his invitation. She rose and fairly sprang to meet him. She seized his hand and squeezed it so that he cried out with pain; our coxcomb leaped backwards, fearing the poor lady had a nervous spasm, and looked at her anxiously, not knowing exactly what to do. But Madame Volenville allowed him no time for reflection. She pulled him violently toward the incomplete quadrille, took her place, balanced to her partner, and made him do the cat's-tail, and the English chain, before he had recovered from his astonishment.

Madame Volenville's dance, which was both heroic and lively, made a great sensation. A confused murmur ran about the salons, and the young people left the écarté tables and came to watch this quadrille, of which the auctioneer's wife was such a marked feature. The lady found the attention very flattering, and was enchanted. She

redoubled her ardor, her vivacity, and endeavored to electrify her partner, who did not seem to share her sprightliness; he grew red with anger as he saw the circle which formed around him, heard the mocking compliments the young men addressed to him, and the malicious remarks of the young ladies. He bit his lips, clenched his fists, and would have given all he possessed if he could have ended the quadrille. Madame Volenville left him very little time for contemplation. She was almost constantly in movement; she wished to be continually balancing, or going, or coming, despite the counsels of her cavalier, who almost wore himself out in saying, —

"It is not our turn, madame. In a moment. We do not pass yet. Stay in your place."

But Madame Volenville was launched. She wished to make up for the five hours of waiting, and when by any chance she stopped for a moment, her eyes wandered over the circle surrounding her with extreme satisfaction; while she wiped the drops of perspiration from her brow, her look seemed to say to the company, "You did not expect to see me dance like that. Another time you will invite me sooner."

But the punishment of Belcour (that was the name of Madame Volenville's partner) drew to its close. They had already done the grand right and left three times, and once more would finish it, when a facetious young notary's clerk, fond of

practical jokes, ran to the orchestra and asked for another figure in the form of a jig. His request was made in the name of the entire company, and as an orchestra at a wedding is at the service of the guests, the musicians began to play the jig at the very moment when Belcour bowed to Madame Volenville, and was endeavoring to get away as fast as possible.

The voice of Orpheus imploring the gods of hell could not have made such an impression upon Pluto as did the sounds of the violins and the air of the jig upon Madame Volenville.

"Monsieur, monsieur, it is not finished!" she exclaimed to Belcour, who was determined to escape, and pretended not to hear. He had reached the door of the salon, when Madame Volenville ran after him, caught him, stopped him.

"Monsieur, what are you doing?" she cried. "Have you not heard the sound of the violins? Oh, what a pretty air! It's a jig! Come quickly."

"Madame, pardon me, but I thought—"

"It is a jig, monsieur, and I love that dance."

"Madame, I do not feel at all well, and—"

"You will see my English steps. I have made many conquests in this dance."

"Madame, I shall have to get a breath of air."

"It was really in this dance that my husband fell in love with me at the Bal des Sceaux."

"But, madame—"

Belcour tried in vain to defend himself. Ma-

dame Volenville would not let go of him, and, without paying attention to his excuses, pulled him toward the dance. Seeing that a long argument would increase the absurdity of his position, he yielded, and returned to his place in the set. The crowd of curiosity-seekers quickly made way for the couple who had provided so much amusement.

The signal was given. Each began, the cavaliers to the right, the ladies following, Madame Volenville first of all. With what ardor she ran to the other dancers and made them turn! The perspiration ran down her cheeks and effaced the rouge; two of the patches fell from her temple and stuck under her ear; her hair lost its curl; her garland of roses dropped from its place and formed a collarette; but she could not be stopped in her career of conquest by such trifles as that. In a moment she had made the tour of the quadrille and returned to her place. Belcour was no longer there. He had profited by the confusion of the figure to slip away. However, a cavalier madame must have, and she seized the first one who came along.

An old attorney in a hammer-shaped perruque happened to be opposite her. The dear man, urged by curiosity, came from the midst of the crowd; he had pushed himself before the others and was looking admiringly at the white throat of a pretty dancer, who paid no attention to his

grimaces, when Madame Volenville threw herself between him and the object of his admiration, dancing the English steps and displaying her most fascinating airs. The old attorney looked with a horrified gaze at the excited and convulsed face, the dishevelled hair and faded flesh of Madame Volenville. He recoiled, but she seized his hands; in spite of himself, he was made to turn, to jump.

"Madame, I cannot!" he cried, in his turn.

"Come on, monsieur; I must have a partner."

"Madame, stop, I say. I have never waltzed in my life."

"It is not a waltz, monsieur; it is a jig."

"Madame, I cannot go on. I am dizzy. I shall fall."

"You dance like an angel."

Madame Volenville was possessed of a demon. She believed herself still as fascinating as she had been years before, and was convinced that her movements, her grace, her vivacity and her little airs ought to charm everyone. She did not realize that years alter all aspects; the graces of twenty become pretension at forty; the gayety which is natural to youth seems folly in mature age; the quick and humorous changes of a young face become odious grimaces in an elderly countenance.

It is still possible to please in mature age, but one cannot do so by aping the buoyancy of youth. Nothing is more pleasing, more captivat-

ing, than to see the mother of a family dancing without pretension, opposite her daughter; and nothing is more ridiculous than to see an elderly coquette, with her hair dressed as though she were sixteen, trying to rival the frivolity of the young ladies.

Madame Volenville was, as you perceive, an indefatigable dancer, and wished to transmit to the soul of her partner all the ardor which animated her own. But the old attorney was red as a cherry, rolled his eyes without distinguishing anything; everything was turning before him; the jig, the heat, and his anger, completely stupefied him. He held his head as far as possible from his gay partner; but, to complete his misfortune, his wig became detached, and fell to the floor, where it was trampled under the feet of the dancers; and the attorney's head was presented to the eyes of the company, as naked as his hand.

This last accident redoubled the fury of the unfortunate gentleman, and gave him courage to revenge himself upon his partner. He pushed her so violently from him that she fell back upon the stomach of a stout clerk, who was sitting tranquilly upon a bench at the end of the hall, recalling with complacency the dishes of which he had eaten at dinner.

The stout papa shrieked at receiving the weight of madame so unexpectedly upon his comfortable expanse of front. He swore that she would suf-

The stout papa shrieked at receiving the weight of madame so unexpectedly upon his comfortable expanse of front.

PHOTOGRAVURE FROM ORIGINAL DRAWING BY WILLIAM GLACKENS.

focate him; but madame did not budge, for no woman of good social standing will fall upon anyone without fainting immediately afterward. Mr. Tourte — for that was the name of the stout clerk — cried "Help!" while M. Robineau, our old attorney, called loudly for his wig, which he vainly sought in every corner of the hall, and which he could not find, because the young lawyer's clerk had thrown it out of one of the windows overlooking the boulevard, whence it had alighted on the nose of a coachman who was looking up to the sky to learn if it were likely to rain tomorrow.

However, Edouard and Madame Germeuil endeavored to restore order and quiet. As for Adeline, she could not help laughing with all the other young people at the position of Madame Volenville, the face of M. Tourte and the anger of M. Robineau.

M. Volenville left his écarté and obtained a glass of water, with which he approached his wife, whom at first he did not know, so great was the disorder of her dress and her countenance. Then, after taking a pinch of snuff, he removed the remains of the rose wreath from his wife's neck and slapped her hands, while Madame Germeuil held a bottle of salts under her nostrils; nothing, however, had any effect upon the darkened senses of the dancer. Madame Germeuil knew not what other means to employ. M. Tourte swore that he would bite Madame Volenville's arm if he were

not soon relieved of her weight, and the auctioneer opened his snuffbox in search of ideas.

At this moment M. Robineau ran through the hall with his head bald as an infant's, searching furiously under the feet of the guests, and under the furniture, for his perruque; he approached the group which surrounded the unconscious lady, and, perceiving something gray under the bench which supported the clerk and his swooning burden, he sprang forward, pushed M. Volenville, got upon all-fours, and thrust his hand between the legs of the people, to seize the object which had attracted his attention, and which he believed was his beloved wig.

The movement of M. Robineau had been so quick that the auctioneer lost his equilibrium, and he fell half over his wife; his snuffbox was open, and was emptied on the nose, mouth and chin of his tender half.

This accident recalled Madame Volenville to life. She sneezed five times in succession, rubbed her eyes, opened her mouth, swallowed a great quantity of snuff, and made such horrible faces that her husband and the people around her fled in terror. She ejected the contents of her mouth violently into the face of M. Robineau, and this gentleman rose instantly from his recumbent position, and withdrew his hand from beneath the bench, swearing like the damned. Some people swear a great deal in this world, irrespective of

the amount they will do when they shall fry like white puddings upon the gridirons of his plutonic majesty.

But why did M. Robineau swear? Why, dear reader? Because, when he put his hand under the bench, instead of finding his perruque, which, as you know, was floating around upon the boulevard, he encountered the tail of a gray cat, which, enraged at feeling itself being forcibly pulled by its sensitive end, had, according to the habit of its kind, buried its claws in the hand of the aggressor.

"It is very disagreeable to be unhappy," said a good citizen of the Marais, the other evening, as he witnessed a production of the "Pie Voleuse," and wept at the misfortunes of Palaiseau's little servant. I will say myself, to express what I presume this gentleman wished to say, that it is cruel to experience in a single evening as many misfortunes as those which fell to the lot of M. Robineau. There is ample excuse for being angry when one has been forced to dance against his will, has lost his favorite wig, has had his hand torn by a cat's claws, and when someone has spit in his face. The poor attorney turned all sorts of colors, and, quite beside himself with rage, was about, despite her sex, to assault Madame Volenville, when some of the company threw themselves between him and the one whom he regarded, quite justly, as the author of all his misfortunes.

It was difficult to calm M. Robineau, and persuade him that Madame Volenville had not spat upon him intentionally. While he wiped his face, the bridegroom drew from his pocket a pretty new foulard handkerchief and offered it to the attorney as a protection to his head.

M. Robineau accepted it and tied it over his round hat. This gave him the air of a Spanish insurgent, or a bandolero, or a guerilla, or a bandit, or, if you please, of one of those little costumed dogs which ride about the streets, sitting majestically in the basket of a trained donkey.

The attorney left the salon without paying respects to the ladies, and without kissing the bride. He hastened to quit the Cadran Bleu, but he could not escape the jokes and questions of the waiters and scullions he encountered upon his passage. He did not take a carriage, for he lived near by, and, on arriving at home, got to bed as quickly as possible, fuming against waltzes and jigs, and calculating what a new wig would cost him.

As for Madame Volenville, — M. Tourte having at last been freed from his burden, — it was necessary to remove her immediately from the ballroom; for the snuff which she had swallowed was affecting her stomach, and indications pointed to further disagreeable effects.

The poor lady was led and almost carried far from the theatre of her exploits. As she passed before a mirror, she thought she could die of

shame, and almost fainted anew at sight of the devastation that had been worked in her toilet and adornment. Her face was spotted with tobacco, her hair was draggled and unsightly, and her appearance generally such as must fill with dismay the heart of a woman of pretension; and the pretensions of Madame Volenville were not slight for her age.

Her husband was sought, but it was difficult to persuade him to approach his better half. He declared that she wore a mask. At last the couple were put in a cab and carried home, where we will leave them, to return to the young married people.

Terpsichore had chased away cruel Discord, who, since the wedding of Thetis and Peleus, where they were foolish enough not to invite her, has formed a habit of slipping in to trouble all nuptial fêtes. This is probably why she deigned to take part in the bourgeois marriage at the Cadran Bleu. For they say that no household can ever evade a visit from this unfortunate goddess; and when she does not show herself there on the first day, she takes her revenge in the course of the year.

But let us set aside Discord, Terpsichore, and all the other mythological personages. We will employ no figures and no metaphors; we will abandon, to the authors of octavo novels, flowers, cascades, the moon, the stars, and especially those very poetical inversions which teach us at the end

of a sentence what the hero wished to say to us at the commencement; those charming detours by which a father will say, "At last my daughter advanced toward me," instead of remarking, quite simply, "My daughter came to me." It seems to me this would be much more clear, but it would resemble the ordinary manner in which people express themselves in the world, in society, — the ignoble jargon which ought not to be used by characters who live in caves without bumping their noses, or who, at every turn, climb perpendicular rocks without being fatigued when they reach the summit.

And besides, our pretty women, our modish belles, — will they read a novel through if a hero speaks just as their husbands and their lovers do? "Fie, now! that is too commonplace a thing," they will say, throwing aside in disdain a novel which is neither English, nor German, nor romantic; "that is of an intolerable character; it is full of forbidden expressions; the author even uses the word 'cocu.' Ah, Heavens, how dreadful! But the critics will punish this author well."

In fact, the critic reads the work; he decides that it is full of revolting immorality; the author is guilty of such cynicism, such obscenity; he uses the word "cuckold" when he considers it necessary. Can you imagine such indecency? In truth, Molière often uses this same word, as well as others equally expressive, in several of his works;

but what a difference! A thing which is to be said upon the stage before the public, one must be careful not to print in a novel! Use your complexities, fine gentlemen who write novels; devote yourselves to syntax; take the style ad usum tyronum linguee latinæ; drag in mythology, astronomy, mineralogy, ornithology, zoölogy, even conchology; mix up with all that a little ancient and sacred history, many stories of ghosts, of minstrels, of Druids, of hermits, according to the time and place; write sonorous sentences, which were formerly described as pathos, and you will assuredly make a fashionable success! The ladies will become ill while they are reading you, others after they have finished you; there will be some who do not understand you, but this will make you appear even more beautiful to them. To be unintelligible is to reach the utmost sublimity of genius. Great geniuses envelop themselves in mystery, as was evinced by Cagliostro, — who ought not to be dead because he was a sorcerer, — by Lord Byron, and by Mademoiselle Lenormand.

As to you, young authors, who pretend to be simple and natural, who prefer to make your readers laugh, or interest them with such events as may happen any day under your eyes, and who reproduce them in such a manner as to be easily comprehended, return to oblivion, where you will see Georges Dandin and the Malade Imaginaire; they are the ones who are worthy of you, but you

will be never read by hysterical ladies, and your name will never be echoed by the hundred mouths of fame.

In spite of all this, we have the bad habit of writing as we would speak; we shall continue to do this, and you are free to drop the volume, reader, if this manner does not please you.

They still danced at the Cadran Bleu, but the fête was drawing to its close. At last the hour for dispersion sounded, and Madame Germeuil led away her daughter. They entered their carriages and rolled homeward, soon reaching the Boulevard Montmartre, where the new establishment was to be set up. Adeline's kind mother was to live with them, for her daughter must fulfil the duty of closing her eyes.

A pretty apartment had been arranged; Madame Germeuil tenderly kissed her daughter and passed into her own room, not without sighing a little, which was very natural; the rights of a mother cease when those of a husband begin. But how unimportant are rights when hearts remain the same! Nature and love easily find their places in a sensitive nature, but they have no influence over one which is cold and egotistic. Men may make laws, but they cannot govern sentiments.

It was fortunate for Edouard that the charming Adeline loved him because he pleased her, and not merely because the church had commanded her to love him.

It was for this reason that, when the young bride was alone with her husband, she threw herself into his arms without weeping; that is why she felt no false modesty in his presence, and that is why we shall say no more about them.

To those who love each other the honeymoon is always the fairyland of married life, the period filled with sweet memories to which the hearts of both turn, no matter what happiness grows out of the intimacy of deeper knowledge. Let us leave the young couple in the joy of that first night, which is the preface of so many joys, and make the acquaintance of someone we shall meet later in this history.

Among the crowd which had surrounded Madame Volenville and M. Robineau, and which had laughed at the mishaps of the auctioneer's wife and the attorney, one man only remained a cold spectator of the folly of others and took no part in the pleasantries of the young clerk or the tricks devised by him to prolong the contra-dance. This man did not appear more than twenty-eight or thirty years of age. He was tall and well built, and his face would have been handsome had his eyes been more ingenuous in their expression; but his shifty glance, to which he sought to give an expression of good-will, did not inspire confidence or liking; and the smile which at times played about his lips seemed bitter rather than sweet.

Dufresne — for that was his name — had been brought to Edouard Murville's wedding by a stout mamma with three daughters, whose habit it was to carry half a dozen young men to all the reunions where she went with her young ladies.

This Madame Devaux loved to receive many people, and especially gentlemen. The motive for her preference is not difficult to divine; when one has three dowerless daughters, one cannot find them husbands by keeping them close at home; it is necessary to receive, and to go into society, in the hope that they may inspire a liking that will terminate in marriage.

Unfortunately, virtuous passions are more rare in the world than in English novels; and often, while they are looking for husbands, young ladies meet only betrayers, who are strong in passion and feeble in virtue. But it is necessary to run some risk in order to catch the husbands.

M. Dufresne had been presented to her by a friend of one of her neighbors; and as he was young, and had a good manner, she had included him in her list of the men she wished to accompany her to Edouard's wedding, in order that her young ladies need not lack for cavaliers.

Dufresne was acquainted neither with the groom nor bride; but it often happens at a large reception that the guests do not know their hosts; and, now that our French gatherings have assumed the character of English routs, and have become mere

crowds, where no one pays attention to his neighbor, it is not rare to issue from these tumultuous assemblies without having even saluted the master or mistress of the house.

Madame Devaux was deceived in her expectations that Dufresne would enable her daughters to dance. The latter did not like dancing; he hastened to do his duty by inviting each of the young ladies Devaux to dance once, after which he was content to be a mere spectator, taking the precaution of passing into the cardroom whenever the quadrilles were incomplete.

Dufresne studied with interest the persons who were present at the fête, but it was upon Edouard and Adeline that his gaze rested most frequently. The sight of the young married couple appeared to captivate his attention. He followed their movements, he watched their slightest actions, and seemed to wish to read the very bottom of their souls. When Adeline smiled tenderly upon her husband, Dufresne stopped a few steps from her, and his eyes devoured every expression.

"Indeed, mamma," said Cleopatre, the eldest daughter of Madame Devaux, to her mother, "we will not take M. Dufresne to a ball again. Do you see how he acts? He doesn't dance at all. He has the air of a regular bear."

"That is true, my dear. At least he might come and sit with us, and chat, and be a little gallant."

"Oh, well, he doesn't pay any attention to us. I should like to ask what he is doing over there in the corner with Madame Germeuil."

"He certainly is not agreeable, and I shall not invite him the day after tomorrow to M. Verdure's, where there will be music and a slight collation. I will take little Godard. He is stupid, but he is always ready to dance."

"Yes, and he is always near enough to get one some refreshments."

"By the way, Cleopatre, who is to take us home this evening?"

"Why, I don't know. Two of our gentlemen have already gone. One of them had a headache, and the other wanted to go to bed early because he has an engagement tomorrow morning. We must find someone, however."

"Never mind; I will get M. Dufresne's hat. He shall not go without us. I will answer for that. He is pretty cool, I must say, to be invited by a party of ladies, and then leave them to take care of themselves."

"You know very well, mamma, that this is not the first time such a thing has happened."

"No matter, Cleopatre. It shall not be this evening, and M. Dufresne shall pay for the carriage."

While this conversation went on between the ladies, Dufresne continued to make his observations. He noticed that Madame Germeuil seemed

to be intimately acquainted with a young widow named Dolban, and from that moment Madame Dolban became the object of all his attentions. It was easy for him to form her acquaintance, for the widow was not at all pretty, and the attentions of a fascinating man appeared more flattering to her because she seldom received them.

When Dufresne wished to go, he fell into the trap which Madame Devaux had laid for him. He could not find his hat until the moment that the mamma and her three daughters were ready to leave. There was no way of avoiding the drudgery. He must present his respects and do his duty.

The young man fulfilled the service that was expected of him with a sufficiently good grace. He bundled the Devaux family into a carriage, seated himself on the front seat between Cleopatre and Césarine, and rolled away to Rue des Martyrs.

During the journey the young man was obliged to endure a rattling fire of epigrams, launched by the young ladies, against young men who are not obliging, who are peculiar, who have bad taste, who talk to homely women when pretty ones are present, and a thousand other sarcasms inspired by the vexation they had experienced in witnessing his attentions to Madame Dolban.

Dufresne listened to this very tranquilly; in fact, I do not believe he heard the remarks at all;

for he did not trouble his mind with the people who were chatting near him, and he was too deeply preoccupied to listen to the prattle of three young ladies.

At last they reached the Rue des Martyrs. Dufresne escorted the Devaux family to their door. He bowed in answer to mamma's courtesy, received a cold salutation from Cleopatre, a very dry "Good-evening!" from Césarine, and a suppressed sigh from Cornelie.

CHAPTER III

Plans for Happiness. The Terrible Mustaches

Adeline awakened in the arms of Edouard on the morning after the marriage. The young woman felt a new and sweet confidence which was born of this tender and intimate relation; it seemed to add a fresh and more sacred value to the deep love she already experienced for Edouard. The fluttering timidity, the bashfulness of the maiden were gone; the complete, loving trust of the wife took its place.

What beautiful plans they made for the long and happy future they were to spend together! What a charming existence they arranged for themselves, where all was to be sunshine, and the storms of life were all to pass them by, for one is so sure that he will always be happy when the arms of the one he loves best are about him. These young people, therefore, yielded themselves without reserve to all the illusions which embellish the imaginations of two young lovers, and for the time being make earth a paradise for them.

Adeline, sweet, sensitive, loving, was sure of being always happy while loved by her Edouard;

and he would love her always. She did not doubt it, and neither did he. When a man is experiencing all the delights of love in the arms of his wife, he can swear sincerely that his feelings will never alter.

It seems, in the moments of expanding confidence which follow the first free expression of love, that people are born for each other. The same tastes, the same desires, are felt by both; each divines the thought of the other, and it is as though there were one soul in two bodies. Happy accord! Sweet union! You would ensure the most perfect bliss, if you could endure forever.

"So, darling," said Edouard, kissing his wife's pretty little hands, "we will spend the winter in Paris, and four months of the fine season in the country."

"Yes; that is settled, dear."

"But how shall I keep my place in the city offices? I should have difficulty in obtaining leave of absence."

"You must not keep it. What would be the use? We have an income of fifteen thousand livres; is not that sufficient for our happiness?"

"Oh, yes; more than is necessary."

"Besides, the office would take you every day from my side, and I do not wish that."

"Dear Adeline — But what will your mother say if I leave my employment?"

"Mamma has but one wish, which is to render

me happy; she will approve our plans; she is no more ambitious than are we."

"Well, that is decided; tomorrow I will send in my resignation."

"Yes, my dear."

"And we will buy a pretty little country house, simple, but in good taste, where we will live with your mother. In what direction shall we go?"

"Wherever you please, my dear."

"No; that is for you to decide."

"You know very well that I am always of your opinion."

"Well, let us visit the suburbs; we will read the real-estate journal; we will consult mamma."

"Very well, my dear."

"Shall we entertain much society?"

"As you please, my love."

"My dear, it is you who should regulate that."

"Oh, well, we will receive very few people, for society would prevent our being together, and taking our walks alone, and I feel that I should not like that."

"How sweet you are!"

"We will only receive a few friends; those of my mother, for instance."

"Very good. In the morning we will walk in our garden; for we must have a garden — must we not?"

"Oh, yes, my dear; a large garden, where there will be a pavilion and some shrubbery."

"Ah, you are already thinking of the shrubbery."

"Does that vex you, monsieur?"

For his only response, Edouard kissed his wife, and pressed her to his heart.

"Well, we'll have a large garden, with thick shrubbery," said Edouard, when they resumed the conversation.

"Oh, yes, my dear," responded Adeline. "In the evening we will walk about in the neighborhood; we will go and see the villagers dance; or, if it is bad weather, we will have a game of cards with a neighbor. Shall you like that?"

"Oh, yes, my dear; that will be very pleasant."

The tender Adeline was always of her husband's opinion; Edouard did not wish to have any will of his own; and the only question was as to who would not be the master, and as to who should not command in the house.

The couple were discussing a very interesting point in their conjugal happiness; they were dreaming of the children they would have, of the education they would give them, and the professions they would wish them to follow, when a gentle knock at the door interrupted them.

It was Madame Germeuil, who came to greet her daughter, and rejoice in the happiness she read in her eyes. It was a moment of sweet significance to a mother, recalling the same epoch in her own life.

Adeline blushed as she kissed her mother. The kind mamma announced that breakfast was waiting, and breakfast is a very important matter, even to newly married people. The bride, as is usual in such cases, ate little; and the groom did not eat, he devoured,— new proof that men are less loving than women, since the same cause does not produce the same result.

During the progress of the meal, the young people spoke to Madame Germeuil of their plans. Mamma made a little grimace when she learned that Edouard was to give up his place. She tried to show them the wrong that this would do to Edouard, because it would deprive him of the honorable ambition he now felt, of rising in rank, and of being one day nominated chief of his department. The young man said nothing. Perhaps he felt within himself that his mother-in-law was right. But Adeline coaxed her mother with sweet artfulness; she kissed her so tenderly, and painted such a picture of the life the three would lead together, suggesting so adroitly the joys of their country life, that Madame Germeuil had not the courage to resist her daughter's entreaties, and the plan was adopted.

"However," said Madame Germeuil, "Edouard cannot remain wholly unemployed. Idleness is a dangerous state, and leads to the committal of follies of which one would never have entertained the least idea, had one been fully occupied."

"O mamma! don't be afraid; Edouard shall always have enough to do; I will take care of that. There are many details connected with our own affairs. He will have to attend to the preservation of our own little fortune; besides, the cares of our country home; then the time he will pass with me, the walks we shall take."

"But, my dear, you cannot always be walking."

"Oh, no; but we shall rest, and then we shall work in our garden — and our children; you do not think of them; shall we not have to bring them up, to watch over their education, guide their first steps?"

"Ah, you are already thinking of the children you will have."

"Why, yes, mamma; that is a part of our plans."

"You are very foolish, my dear Adeline."

"No, mamma; you will find that I am very reasonable, and my husband also."

Madame Germeuil did not appear entirely convinced as to the wisdom of her daughter's plans; but she intended to watch constantly over the interests of her children, and she knew that Adeline, though given to building castles in the air, would be the first to acknowledge her mistakes if ever she made any. As for Edouard, he did everything one wished; it was only necessary to give him good advice as to anything that was in question, and not to do like his wife, who had no will

but his. After breakfast they employed themselves in determining which locality they should choose for their country home; they sent for a real-estate paper, and Adeline was looking over it with her husband, while Madame Germeuil was trying to remember which was the most healthy neighborhood, when Edouard uttered an ejaculation of surprise and jumped from his seat.

"What is the matter?" asked Adeline, astonished at her husband's emotion.

"Something good," said Edouard, continuing to read the journal. "At Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, a house surrounded by fields — two stories — a large garden — a pavilion — a court — an iron railing — "

"But there is nothing in all that to disturb your digestion."

"O my darling! O my dear mother! This house — "

"Why, do you know it?"

"Do I know it? It belonged to my father, and I passed there a part of my youth."

"He parted with it?"

"Misfortune compelled him to sell it; but he always regretted it."

"Why, my dear, you never mentioned it to us."

"I had no idea that it was still for sale."

"We need look no further, my dear, — the dwelling in which you passed a part of your child-

hood. Dear Edouard! Oh, how pleased I am! Mamma, you are willing — are you not?"

"Yes, my child, if the house be not too dear."

"Oh, it will not prove too dear; it is Edouard's house."

"Villeneuve-Saint-Georges; yes, I believe the air there is very good."

"Certainly; the air is delightful; let us go there at once, my dear husband."

"But, my daughter, it is already late. You know you did not get up early, and if we wait till tomorrow —"

"Tomorrow! And suppose the house should be sold today. Oh, I should never forgive myself, nor would Edouard; he says nothing, but he is just as impatient to go."

"We'll go, dear, since it will give you so much pleasure; I believe it is only about twelve miles distant."

"We have a good country carriage; the horse has been rested for a fortnight; he will take us very quickly."

"Where shall we dine?"

"At Villeneuve-Saint-Georges. There are good restaurants — are there not, Edouard?"

"Oh, yes; we shall easily find some dinner."

"But we cannot get back before night. You know very well, Adeline, that I don't like to drive in the evening."

"But, mamma, Edouard will drive us; you

know he is a careful driver. Besides, the road is in fine condition — is it not, dear?"

"It was so, at all events, ten years ago."

"You see very well, mamma, there is not a bit of danger. Ah, say you will go."

"It is necessary I should do everything you wish."

"How good you are! I will go and put on my hat."

Adeline ran to arrange her toilet, Edouard told old Raymond, their servant, to put the horse to the carriage, Madame Germeuil prepared for the journey, and Marie, the maid of the new establishment, saw with chagrin that the appetizing dinner which she had prepared for the day after the wedding would not be touched.

The young wife was the first to be ready. One does not spend much time over a toilet when one is sure of pleasing; this must be why the elderly coquettes pass several hours at a time before the mirror. Adeline wore a simple muslin gown, with a ribbon knotted about her slender waist. She had on a straw hat, which was not loaded with flowers and plumes. A light shawl was thrown negligently over her shoulders. In this simple costume Adeline was charming. Everything about her breathed love and happiness. Joy can increase the charm of even a very pretty woman.

Edouard gazed at his wife with intoxication. Madame Germeuil contemplated her daughter

with pride. Adeline kissed both her dear ones, and gave her hand to her mother, to lead her down immediately. The young wife was eager to set forth, and longed to see the house where Edouard had been reared. The young husband was not less anxious to see the surroundings which would recall the joys of his infancy. At last kind mamma was placed safely in the carriage; Adeline sat beside her; Edouard took the reins, and they were off for Villeneuve-Saint-Georges.

Edouard drove the horse at a good pace, and in a short time they reached the village. When they had left the highroad and turned into a country lane, they recognized the house which they were desirous of viewing; then Adeline jumped for joy, and took off her hat, that she might see it more clearly; then Edouard lashed the horse with all his might; while Mamma Germeuil exclaimed loudly that he would upset them. At last the carriage stopped before the iron railing which enclosed the court.

"That is it; that is surely it," said Edouard, jumping to the ground; "I recognize the door — the court — and even that bell. It is the same as when I lived here; — and see the notice that indicates that the house is still for sale."

While he examined with emotion the outside of the house, Adeline assisted her mother to alight from the carriage; they tied the horse and entered the court, for the gate was not shut.

"This pleases me greatly," said Adeline, glancing on all sides with looks expressive of satisfaction; "is not the house charming, mamma?"

"Wait, my daughter; we have seen nothing as yet."

A big peasant issued from the ground floor, followed by an enormous dog.

"What do you want?" he said, examining the newcomers rather incivilly.

"We desire to look at the house," answered Edouard.

"Yes, and to buy it," added Adeline quickly.

"Well and good," murmured the porter between his teeth; "follow me, and I will conduct you to my master."

Edouard, his wife and Madame Germeuil followed their conductor, who climbed a staircase and led them into a dining-room on the first floor, where he left them, to go and inform his master.

Presently a thin, acrimonious voice was audible from the room into which the porter had entered, and our travellers heard the following colloquy:—

"What do you want with me, Pierre?"

"Monsieur, here are some purchasers for the house."

"Oh, you are always bothering me unnecessarily, and bringing me a lot of stupid people."

"But, monsieur, these appear to be well-to-do folks."

"This devil of a man will put me in a passion; I shall be ill — that's sure."

"I tell you, sir, these people came in a carriage."

"Ah, that's different; I'll go and talk with them."

Madame Germeuil and her children knew not what to think of this conversation, when the door of the adjoining room opened; a little man, thin, yellow, wrinkled, attired in a dressing-gown and nightcap, entered, and bowed to the visitors with an air which he vainly tried to render agreeable.

"We are desirous of looking over the house," said Edouard. "I am familiar enough with it myself, but these ladies will be pleased to see it."

"It is very singular," said the little old gentleman, looking at his porter, "that everybody knows my house. And do you intend to purchase?"

"Undoubtedly, if the price suits us."

"In that case I will take you over it myself."

"What an original!" said Adeline in a whisper, to her husband. "I'll wager he is some old usurer who has retired here and who cannot resist the desire of again entering business in the city."

They went over the house from the ground floor to the attics; the little gentleman neglected nothing, and Edouard, who was greatly pleased at revisiting his old home, listened with patience to all the details given by the old proprietor as to the conveniences which his house contained, and from time to time looked at his wife smilingly.

"This is certainly the place," said he on entering each room. "I recognize this room — that closet — these chests."

On this the old man smiled also at his servant; both of them seemed to understand him.

"You formerly resided here, monsieur?" inquired the master of the Murville dwelling at last.

"Yes, monsieur, yes; I passed a part of my youth here."

"That's very odd," murmured the porter under his breath.

"It is surprising," said the old proprietor to himself.

Madame Germeuil found the house commodious and airy; Adeline was delighted, and Edouard requested to see the gardens. The little gentleman, excusing himself from accompanying them, since he was already tired, begged them to follow his porter, and our young people were not sorry to be rid of his presence for a time. The peasant led the way, Madame Germeuil followed, and Adeline and Edouard closed the procession hand in hand, Edouard remarking to his wife at every turn that he recalled some event of his youth.

"It was here," said Edouard, "that I read near my father. It was in this walk that my brother Jacques loved to run and to climb these beautiful apricot trees."

"That poor brother Jacques! You never had any news of him?"

"No — oh, he died in some foreign country, else he would have returned; he would have tried to see our parents once more."

"That comes of not watching over children," said Madame Germeuil; "perhaps the poor fellow came to a bad end."

Edouard made no response; the memory of his brother always made him thoughtful and sad. He was almost sure that poor Brother Jacques was no more; perhaps his self-respect caused him to nourish this idea in preference to that which pictured Jacques returning poor and degraded. More especially since the certainty of his union with Adeline had Edouard feared to find his brother hidden in a crowd of unfortunates; he thought that that would prejudice Madame Germeuil against him; and every time a beggar of the same age as his brother stopped before Edouard, he felt the color fly to his face and he moved rapidly away, without looking at the poor devil who asked an alms of him, for fear of recognizing Brother Jacques.

Edouard was not, however, unfeeling; he would not have wished to disown his brother, but he believed he should find him in a contemptible situation. It is so with all men; this devil of self-love often stifles the sweetest sentiments. One blushes for his brother, for his sister; there are even those who blush for their father and mother. These

people apparently think that they themselves are not sufficiently estimable to dispense with a genealogical tree.

But let us return to our young married people, who are going over every turn of the garden, smiling, and pressing each other's hands when passing a dark grotto or under a bit of dense shrubbery. The porter had lingered just for a moment to readjust his dog's collar; Madame Germeuil and her children continued their walk, and at last they reached the extremity of the garden, which gave upon the fields and was enclosed by a very high wall; but an opening had been made for the convenience of the tenants, and the railing which closed this opening had been re-covered with planks, so that persons passing along the fields could not look into the garden.

However, these planks being partially rotted, some of them had become detached, and when the party passed before the railing they perceived a man, who, with his head fixed between the iron bars at a spot where the planks were broken down, was looking with much interest into the garden.

Madame Germeuil could not restrain a cry of surprise. Adeline experienced a secret trembling, and Edouard himself felt disturbed at the aspect of this face, which nobody had expected to find there.

The countenance of the man who was looking into the garden was such as might easily startle the beholder. He had black eyes, an olive skin

and a heavy mustache; while a scar, running from the left eyebrow almost across the face, gave his features a ferocious and sinister expression, which certainly would not prejudice the beholder in his favor.

"Ah, good God! who is that?" said Madame Germeuil, suddenly stopping.

"It is only a man who is amusing himself by looking through the railing," answered Edouard, looking at the stranger, who was not at all abashed, and continued to examine the garden.

"I was nearly frightened," said Adeline, in a low tone.

"Nearly, my daughter! You are very fortunate. As for me, I confess that I am not yet reassured."

While thus speaking Madame Germeuil moved away from the railing and pressed closer to her son-in-law.

"How childish you are, ladies! It is quite natural that in passing a beautiful garden one should amuse himself by looking in for a moment. That has happened to all of us twenty times."

"Yes, of course; but we have not such faces — such a mustache. It is enough to frighten one to death. See; he is not in the least put out; he does not appear to notice us."

At this moment the porter rejoined the party. In approaching the gate which opened upon the fields, he saw the face which had frightened the

ladies. He made a wry grimace and mumbled between his teeth, —

"Still there! That cursed man will never take himself away."

The unknown glanced at the porter, and the ladies read in the look with which he surveyed the peasant an expression of scornful anger. Then, after glancing for a moment at the persons in the garden, he withdrew his head from between the bars and disappeared.

"I should very much like to know who that man is," said Adeline, looking at her husband.

"I have not a very good opinion of him," said Mamma Germeuil, who breathed more freely since the head with mustaches was no longer behind the bars. "That man looked like one whose intentions were evil — did he not, Edouard?"

"Oh, my dear mother, I can't go so far as that. If we had seen the entire individual, perhaps his face would not appear so formidable to us as when placed like that between rotten planks and behind an iron railing."

"My dear husband is right, mamma. I believe that the way in which we regard objects depends upon the situation in which they are first presented to our sight. A man covered with rags often inspires us with suspicion; while, if we saw him well dressed, we should experience no such fear from his appearance. Night, silence, moonlight, the shade which it throws upon objects, — all these

change our ideas of things, and appeal vividly to our imaginations."

"You may say all you like, my dear, but that face was not that of a man who was looking into a garden from pure curiosity."

"That is possible; but I should like to have seen the figure of the stranger."

"Parbleu!" said the porter; "you would not have seen anything very handsome, I assure you."

"Perhaps you know the man?" questioned Adeline.

"I don't know him, madame; but I have seen him before this morning. He looks to me like a scoundrel who has come into this village to plan some evil deed. But if he dares to come here again I shall set my dog on him."

"And you don't know what he is seeking in this village?"

"Faith! I don't care a snap about it; let him keep away from the house; that's all I ask."

As they had now reached the house, and found the proprietor awaiting them before the door, Adeline did not prolong her conversation with the porter.

"Well, what do you think of the gardens?" said the old man to Adeline.

"They are very pretty, monsieur; and much could be done with them; don't you think so, mamma?"

"Yes, yes; perhaps so, if the house suits us."

Since Mamma Germeuil had seen that ill-omened head at the foot of the garden, she had not appeared so delighted with the house or its situation. But her children desired so earnestly to buy it that she put aside her repugnance as puerile, and offered no opposition to the conclusion of the sale.

The little man was inclined at first to fleece the strangers; but when they proposed to pay cash, he consented to reduce his demands, and the sale was concluded. In his satisfaction, the proprietor invited the ladies to come in and rest, and he even offered them a glass of wine and water. But they did not care to make further acquaintance with the old miser; besides, the ladies were hungry, and they must go to the notary's office for the deed before dining.

The little gentleman did not insist on their prolonging their stay. He took off his nightcap and sent the porter to look for an old misshapen felt hat, which he carried under his arm so as to make it last still longer. He put on a coat which was formerly brown, but of which no one could now form a suspicion as to the color, and did not forget his cane with a crow's head, on which he leaned the more willingly because it took the weight off his shoes.

They went to the notary's, who received the agreements of the parties and promised to have the deed of sale ready in proper form within

twenty-four hours. Edouard promised to return the next day to the village with the money for the house; and in his turn, M. Renâré, which was the name of the proprietor, promised to deliver to them punctually the keys of their new dwelling. Everything being concluded they parted, each one satisfied with his bargain.

"Now let us think of dinner," said Edouard, as he left the notary's office with the ladies, "and try to find the best restaurant the neighborhood affords."

"My dear, we should have asked M. Renâré as to that."

"By no means. I am sure the old fellow would have sent us to the worst one of all, in order that we might have less to pay. But hold; I see a very respectable-looking place; it's a wine shop and restaurant combined. The 'Crowned Sword. Weddings and festivals.' What do you say, ladies?"

"Oh, let us try the Crowned Sword."

They entered the country restaurant, the walls of which were ornamented with hams, pâtés, turkeys, fowls, bunches of asparagus, and game. As a rule, the kitchen of a village restaurant offers only a small fraction of the articles which are painted upon its front, and its ovens are often cold.

When our Parisians entered the common room of the Crowned Sword, the proprietor, who was

also chief cook, was shaving himself. His little scullion was playing with a cup and ball, his wife was knitting, and the two maids, as they had nothing else to do, were washing and ironing the linen of the establishment.

"The deuce!" said Edouard, in a low tone; "this does not indicate good cookery; but in war time one must not criticise the commissariat."

"No, my dear; besides, appetite seasons any cookery."

The sight of the elegantly dressed ladies, escorted by a fine-looking gentleman, who came in a carriage which waited before the door, brought into action all the activities of the house. The proprietor threw aside his razors and soap, wiped his face as best he could, and came up, half shaved, to welcome the guests. His wife ceased her knitting, rolled it in her fingers as she courtesied, and placed it on the table where they were ironing. Goton, one of the servants, who held just then a very hot iron, raising her eyes to observe the fashionable ladies who had entered, set her iron on her mistress' hand, in the belief that she was still ironing an apron.

The poor woman uttered a piercing cry when she felt the burn, recoiled, and overturned a tub. The little scullion, frightened, hid his cup and ball in a stewpan, and the ladies drew back so as to avoid stepping in the river of soap and water which flowed across the floor.

The proprietor made every excuse possible, and at the same time sought to quiet his wife.

"A thousand pardons, ladies and gentlemen. Please take the trouble to come in. — Never mind, wife; it won't amount to anything. I've done worse than that to myself many a day. — We have everything you can wish, ladies; the larder is well furnished. — It is this imbecile Goton, who never knows what she is doing. Put some potato on the burn, my dear. — Enter, ladies, I beg of you. You can select any room or cabinet you please."

The ladies were in no hurry to enter, not wishing to wet their feet. At length one of the servants carried a long plank, which served as a bridge, over which they reached the next room. The passage was effected with much laughter, and the ladies and Edouard promised themselves much amusement in an inn where their arrival had caused so much excitement.

"Let us see what you can give us," said Murville to the proprietor, who had followed them, boasting of his ability to serve a dinner promptly.

"Monsieur, I can give you an excellent rabbit stew."

"Ah, rabbit stews are never lacking in such a place as this, but we are not fond of them. Have you any cutlets?"

"Yes, monsieur; I can get some easily."

"A fowl?"

"I have one which should be excellent."

"Some fresh eggs?"

"Oh, we have none but fresh eggs."

"Well, that is all we shall need; with a salad and some of your best wine, we shall dine very well — shall we not, ladies?"

"Yes; but they must not keep us waiting, for we are dying of hunger."

"Rest assured, ladies, the dinner will be very quickly prepared." So saying, Maitre Bonneau returned to the kitchen.

"Quick!" said he, putting his handkerchief on as a sword belt, which he only did on great occasions. "Quick, wife; we have distinguished guests at the restaurant, and we have nothing in the house but rabbit stew, which, unfortunately, they don't like, and that devil of a fowl which I roasted a week ago for the Jew who would eat nothing but fresh pork, and which I have not been able to dispose of since. I hope at last it will get eaten. Goton, put it on the spit; — that will be the fifth time, I believe. Never mind; I will make a gravy with some beef stock, and it will be delicious."

"Mercy, what a burn! I have scraped seven potatoes on it."

"Zounds! you give me a great idea. These scraped potatoes are all ready to cook; put them on one side, wife; I'll make a soufflé of them for our customers. You, Fanfan, run to the butcher's and see if you can get some cutlets; and you, Marianne, go and buy some eggs, and then come

back and pick the salad. Light a candle for me, and give me the wax, that I may seal my bottles; they will think the wine better."

Each one hastened to execute Bonneau's orders, while he lighted his cooking-stove and turned back his cuffs with a capable air, in order to put on water to heat for the eggs. Goton put the unhappy fowl on the spit, praying Heaven it might be for the last time. Marianne brought the eggs and went to the garden to gather a dozen lettuces. Finally, Madame Bonneau brought the scraped potatoes which she had applied to her burn, heaping them carefully upon a plate, as her husband had advised her, because a good cook must have everything ready.

Fanfan returned from the butcher's with bad news, — there were no cutlets to be had, because the mayor had purchased the last that morning; but if they could wait for an hour, the butcher's man, who had gone to sharpen his knives, would be back and would kill a sheep.

"The devil! This is very awkward," said Maitre Bonneau, putting the eggs into the water; "but it is necessary to get my guests' opinion on the subject."

"Well, is dinner ready?" asked Edouard, on seeing his host.

"In one moment, monsieur; in one moment."

"Your moments are rather long."

"I came to get your opinion about the cutlets."

"What is that?"

"There are none to be had at the butcher's; but his man will soon be back, and he will then kill a sheep, and — if you will take a turn in my garden until they are cooked."

"The deuce! We should have to wait some time. That's a cool proposition; we didn't come here to visit your lettuce beds."

"Come, my dear; don't agitate yourself," said Adeline, laughing at the coolness of their host and at Edouard's vexation; "we will dispense with the cutlets."

"May I replace that dish with an excellent rabbit stew, madame?"

"Give us what you will; but at least give us something."

"In one moment you shall be served."

Maitre Bonneau was not sorry to get his rabbit stew eaten; it was the dish in which he especially excelled, having served an apprenticeship of twenty years in making it. He seized a stewpan containing the remains of two rabbits; he put it on the fire, and, having charged Fanfan to stir it, carried his fresh eggs to the company.

"You see, ladies, I am in good time," said the host, putting the eggs upon the table. "It has occurred to me that a potato soufflé, flavored with orange-flower water, might not be displeasing to you."

"Come, do you make soufflés, M. Bonneau?"

"Yes, monsieur; we make them, and in good style, I promise you."

"You are a first-rate cook, then?"

"Monsieur, one who has learned his trade in Paris, at the Boisseau Fleuri, is ready for everything."

"Oh, that's another thing. If you are a pupil of the Boisseau Fleuri, we shall not be surprised at anything, and shall await your soufflé with confidence."

Bonneau retired quite puffed up by the compliments he had received. The ladies tried to eat their eggs with sippets of bread, but it was not possible to do so; the eggs were so hard that they were obliged to shell them and eat them from their fingers. Adeline burst out laughing, Madame Germeuil shook her head, and Edouard declared that, to add insult to injury, the eggs tasted old.

"This makes one feel very doubtful about the soufflé," said mamma, as she put her egg back on the plate.

"Never mind, ladies; we will hope for the best. You know great men seldom pay attention to small things, and a pupil of the Boisseau Fleuri must not be expected to be able to cook soft-boiled eggs."

Bonneau entered, holding with both hands a large dish of stewed rabbit, which he placed before Edouard.

"Monsieur, for a skilful man, your eggs are

a failure; they are hard, and they taste of the straw."

"Monsieur, as to the straw, you know very well I did not make the eggs myself; the hens are entirely to blame for that. As to the cooking, my watch was assuredly at fault; I left the eggs in the water just five minutes; if my watch stopped while they were on the fire, you know the best cook would have had them hard."

"That's true; you are right. Luckily, there are no eggs in the rabbit stew, and it cannot be spoiled in a moment."

"Well, tell me how you like it; I must go now and watch that your fowl is done to a turn."

Bonneau departed, carrying the hard-boiled eggs which nobody had touched; he intended to cut them up to garnish the salad, and in this way be paid twice for the same dish, which was a clear profit. That no one might again say they tasted of the straw, he took from his cupboard a certain oil, the flavor of which would necessarily dominate everything else.

"Come," said Edouard, as he set about helping the ladies, "since we must positively eat this rabbit stew, let us see if it does our host credit. But, what the devil have we here? A string! Does the pupil of the Boisseau Fleuri tie the rabbits together in his stew? This is fastened to something —and I can't see the end. Parbleu! we shall have the piece to which it is attached later. Ah, what's

this? Look at it, ladies is it a thigh? is it a head? These rabbits are constructed very strangely, I must say."

"Oh, gracious!" said Adeline, examining that which Edouard held on his fork, "it is a cup and ball!"

And the young lady dropped her plate and went into convulsions of laughter, in which Edouard joined; and even Madame Germeuil could not maintain her gravity at the sight of the toy which her son-in-law had found in the much-praised rabbit stew.

We must recall to our readers the fact that the arrival of the fashionable party from Paris had put everything at this country restaurant in an uproar; the little scullion was then playing with a cup and ball, and when his mistress burned herself and upset the tub of soapsuds, Fanfan, very much frightened at the confusion, and believing he would be scolded by his master if caught playing at such a moment, had thrust his cup and ball into the nearest stewpan, which happened to be the one containing the rabbit stew. Later on, Maitre Bonneau had covered the saucepan without looking at its contents, and the little boy had industriously stirred the stew as his master had bidden him, without suspecting in the least that he was cooking his own cup and ball. The peals of laughter which greeted this discovery and which rang from the room where the company

were seated at dinner came to the ears of Maitre Bonneau. "Ah," remarked our proprietor, "that sounds as if our guests were pleased. I was sure that rabbit stew would put them in good humor. That's good; it will make the fowl pass more easily. Let's hurry and take it in with the salad. Goton, give me the oil cruet — there it is. Have you cut up the eggs? Good! good!—very good! There is a meal which will bring in enough to support us for a week."

Our good man reached the room where the party were laughing in place of dining. He put his fowl on the table, and remained silent, with the air of a man awaiting a compliment.

"My faith, Mr. Proprietor," said Edouard, trying to recover his gravity, "you treat us in a very peculiar manner. What is this, — a fricassee of cups and balls?"

"What do you say, monsieur?"

"That we have not eaten of that, Monsieur Bonneau, and that it does not suit us."

"But what do you mean?"

"Look at that, sir; is that a rabbit?"

Maitre Bonneau, seeing the cup and ball covered with gravy, was stupefied.

"Take away your stew," said Adeline; "we cannot eat it after what we have found in it."

"Madame, I am much distressed at what has happened; but it is not my fault; if rabbits will eat cups and balls —"

"That's too strong, and if your fowl is no better than the rest, we shall have to dine elsewhere."

The proprietor withdrew, without waiting to hear any more. He reached his kitchen, red with anger, and pulled Fanfan's ears to teach him not to put cups and balls in his fricassees.

"What is the matter, my dear?" said Madame Bonneau to her husband, bringing him the plate which contained the remedy for burns.

"What's the matter? What's the matter? Why, this little imp does nothing but mischief. He puts rubbish in my dishes continually. The other day my customers found two corks in a ragout; fortunately they were drunk, and took them for mushrooms. But today we are dealing with very particular people, and he has prevented their tasting my rabbit stew, and that at the moment I was carrying in that unlucky fowl. This little scamp is as dirty as if he were at a low public-house. Wife, cover your burn carefully; you will have enough potatoes left. Come, come; I must reëstablish my reputation with the soufflé."

Whilst Bonneau scolded over his spoiled dish, Edouard tried to dismember the fowl, and Madame Germeuil seasoned the salad. But in vain the young man turned the old turkey; it was dried by successive exposures to the fire, and the knife would not penetrate it.

"I must give it up," said Edouard, pushing the dish away.

"We cannot possibly eat this oil," said Madame Germeuil, who had tasted the salad.

"Well," said Adeline, "we are fated not to dine today."

"Truly, ladies," said Edouard, rising from the table, "I believe it will be useless to wait for the potato soufflé; we shall probably find poison in that. Put on your shawls and bonnets while I go and give this restaurateur a wigging; he really seems to be making sport of us."

"Don't allow yourself to be angry, dear," remarked Adeline; "remember that the wisest way is to laugh at everything that happens—is it not, mamma?"

"Certainly, my daughter; however, we must not pay for such a dinner as that."

Edouard left the room and went toward the kitchen. Just as he was about to enter the hall, the voice of one of the servants reached his ear; he heard the word "soufflé," and paused before the glass door, curious to learn the subject under discussion, and overheard the following conversation:—

"I tell you, Marianne, I wouldn't eat the mess our master is cooking now if they paid me to do it."

"Oh, you're mighty particular; he's preparing a delicacy."

"A pretty delicacy! It ought to have a good taste."

"Bah! you are too squeamish. If you saw them make bread, you'd see something. They often put more in the dough than comes off the hand. Well, it gets cooked all the same. And the wine! I have an uncle, a vine dresser, who hurt his foot with a nail, which did not prevent his getting into the press and trampling, and the wine was stunning."

"You may say what you please, Goton; I have never seen bread or wine made, but I have seen those potatoes scraped on our mistress' burn. She never washes her hands; and I say a cake made with them would not suit me at all."

Edouard had heard enough. He entered the hall precipitately; the two servants, struck speechless, allowed him to pass into the kitchen, where he found Maitre Bonneau glazing his soufflé with molasses.

Our young gentleman gave a kick to the oven, and sent the dish flying into the garden, to serve as food for the pigeons. The proprietor looked at Edouard with a startled air.

"What's the matter, monsieur? Why are you angry?"

"You cursed cheap cook! you made a soufflé of the potatoes with which you cured your wife's hand."

"Monsieur, what do you say?"

"You understand me very well. You deserve a good lesson."

"Monsieur, I do not understand."

"We are going now. But I shall return to this neighborhood, and I shall remember Maitre Bonneau, pupil of the Boisseau Fleuri, catering for weddings and festivals at the Crowned Sword."

With these words, Edouard left the proprietor and returned to join the ladies. They were preparing to leave the dining-room. "Let us go, ladies," said Edouard; "let us leave this house immediately, and esteem yourselves fortunate in not having partaken of the potato soufflé."

"What was the matter with it, my dear?"

"I will tell you later; the first thing is to leave the house of this cursed poisoner."

Edouard took Adeline's hand, Madame Germeuil followed, and they were leaving the restaurant, when the proprietor ran after them and stopped them.

"One moment, ladies and gentlemen," cried Maitre Bonneau, pushing his cotton cap to the top of his head. "Stop a moment, I beg you. It seems to me you are leaving without paying for your dinner."

"Our dinner! Really, monsieur, you will be very clever if you can prove to us that we have dined."

"Monsieur, I served you with everything that I had at my command. If you did not eat it, it is not my fault."

"You are certainly mocking us, Monsieur Bon-

neau, when you say you served us with what we asked for. We ordered soft-boiled eggs; you gave us hard ones. We ordered cutlets; you brought us a stew of cups and balls. For wine, you gave us vinegar. There was rancid oil for the salad, and a roast fowl which I defy any Englishman to carve, and a soufflé made with — Don't bully me, monsieur, or I shall have you punished as a dishonest man, and have your tavern shut up."

"My tavern!" exclaimed Bonneau, stifling with rage. "We will see about that. Pay me immediately the amount of the bill, — forty francs and fifteen centimes, — or I will take you before the Mayor."

As his only answer, Edouard threw the bill in the wine merchant's face. At this the proprietor made a terrible noise; all the peasants of the village ran towards them.

"These are people from Paris who don't want to pay for their dinner," cried the rabble, always eager to find the city people in the wrong; "they came in a carriage, and have not a sou in their pockets."

Our young couple laughed on hearing this, and made ready to go to the Mayor. Mamma Germeuil followed them in the carriage; the peasants surrounded Maitre Bonneau, while Fanfan marched before him, carrying the famous turkey on a plate, because Edouard demanded that the fowl should be submitted to an examination by

experts. The procession crossed the village and reached the house of the Mayor, gathering in its course all the curiosity-seekers of the neighborhood, for whom any event is a piece of good luck.

They reached the Mayor's house, and asked to speak with him.

"He has not time to listen to you at present," said the domestic; "he is just sitting down to dinner."

"But he must come and decide this matter," said Bonneau.

"And he must judge of this turkey," added Edouard, smiling.

"Oh, well, if there is a turkey in it, perhaps he will come," said the servant. "I will tell him."

The domestic went in search of her master, and explained the affair to him so clearly that he understood absolutely nothing about it, and decided to leave his guests for a moment and return to his audience-chamber.

At this time the Mayor of the district was not a genius. He had just built himself a belvedere in the back of the garden, and as he was enchanted with his little edifice, the idea of which was his own, — and he was apparently afraid that this might not be recognized, — he had inscribed over the entrance door the words, "This belvedere was made here."

A profound silence reigned in the assembly when the Mayor appeared.

"Where is the turkey that has occasioned this quarrel?"

"Monsieur Mayor, it is not only a turkey, it is a whole dinner, for which they will not pay me," said Maitre Bonneau as he advanced.

"A dinner. Oh, that's a matter of importance. Has it been eaten?"

"No, monsieur," said Edouard. "You see in this turkey a specimen of it."

"Examine the bill, monsieur; you will see that it is perfectly just."

"Let me see the card. Fresh eggs —"

"They were hard."

"No matter; who breaks the glasses pays for them; in the same way, who breaks the eggs pays for them."

"A rabbit stew —"

"We found a cup and ball in it."

"That has nothing to do with the rabbits. Besides, you cannot make gravy of a cup and ball. Let us pass to the next,—a roast fowl—"

"There it is, monsieur. Do you wish to taste it and smell it?"

The Mayor made a sign to Fanfan to approach, but the little scullion was frightened at the sight of so many people. He presented the dish with a trembling hand, and the turkey rolled upon the floor.

The so-called roast fowl made a sound like that of a child's drum that rolls on the pavement.

"Well, well; that seems a little dry," said the Mayor as he examined it.

"It is because it was carried over in the sun," said Bonneau; "that has burned it a little."

"Parbleu! I'll call my friend the notary, who knows all about roast fowls, my wife says; he will give me his opinion."

The Mayor opened the door and called the notary, who happened to be dining with him, to come and decide upon the quality of the turkey. Edouard and his wife began to lose patience. They imagined, from what the judge had already said, that they would be obliged to pay the thief of a restaurateur; and the proprietor, feeling as if his case were already gained, looked at them insolently, and turned, smiling, to the crowd of villagers, who were glad of an opportunity to make game of the Paris people.

The notary entered. He glanced at Edouard and his wife. He recognized them immediately as the purchasers of M. Renârê's house, and, instead of looking at the turkey which Bonneau stuck under his nose, he made a most humble salutation to Murville and his pretty companion.

"What! do you know monsieur and madame?" said the Mayor to the notary in surprise.

"I have that honor. This is the gentleman who has bought the property of my neighbor Renârê, and who is paying cash for it. The deed is now being drawn up in my office."

These words of the notary entirely changed the aspect of the affair; the Mayor became excessively polite to Edouard, and extremely gallant to his wife. He begged them to go in and rest for a little while in his drawing-room. Then he turned severely to Maitre Bonneau, who did not know how to account for this sudden change of front.

"You are a rascal, a scoundrel!" he cried angrily. "How dare you demand payment for a dinner that could not be eaten? You serve dried turkeys and spoiled eggs, and then you demand forty francs for it."

"But, monsieur, you said a moment ago —"

"Be quiet, or I will fine you for impertinence. I know that you put drugs in your wine, and that you steal all the cats in the neighborhood for your rabbit stews. But take care, Maitre Bonneau; I shall hold you responsible for the first well-fed cat that disappears."

The restaurant keeper retired in confusion, cursing under his breath at the arrival of the notary, who had made the Mayor's mind turn around like a whirligig. He pushed Fanfan before him, and returned to the restaurant carrying the unfortunate fowl in his hand, and, to make the rest of the company as unhappy as himself, declared that they would eat it for supper.

The Mayor, knowing that Edouard and his wife had not dined, insisted that they should sit down to the table with him. He offered to go himself

for Madame Germeuil, who had remained in the carriage, but the young people were opposed to this. They assured him that they were already expected in Paris, and that they could not delay their departure any longer.

They separated at last, the Mayor expressing the pleasure he felt in making the acquaintance of his new neighbors, and our young people thanking him for the zeal he had shown since the arrival of the notary.

The peasants were still before the Mayor's residence when Edouard and Adeline came out. They drew up in line to let them pass; some of them even ran towards the carriage in order to precede Madame Germeuil, and all saluted with the greatest humility the Paris people who were about to return home.

They were the same persons upon whom the crowd had showered insolent epithets only a few moments before; but at that time the peasants were not aware that the Mayor considered the strangers people of importance. Men are the same everywhere.

CHAPTER IV

In Which One Sees Again the Man of the Mustaches

Despite their satisfaction at the fortuitous outcome of their little trip, our party reached Paris very tired and desperately hungry, as one may easily imagine, and ordered dinner immediately. The servants hurried about, pushing and hustling one another; they took one thing instead of another; they upset the gravies, burned one dish, and served another cold; they did everything wrong, as so often happens when one tries to hasten unduly. The domestics had not expected the family to return to dinner; and old Raymond could not conceive why they came back famished; it gave him a very poor opinion of the neighborhood they had visited; and the cook was quite put out because she had not expected them, and, therefore, had not prepared for them. However, our travellers found everything delicious; they were not likely to be ultra fastidious while old Bonneau's kitchen was still present to their recollection.

The day after this memorable journey, Adeline was too greatly fatigued to accompany Edouard to

Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, and as they had promised M. Renâré, it was necessary that the young wife should consent to allow her husband to go alone. Murville promised to be absent as short a time as possible; he counted on returning to dinner.

"Take care," said Mamma Germeuil, "that you meet no bad characters."

"I believe, mamma, that you are still thinking of that mustached face which we saw at the end of the garden."

"I do not deny it; I will even confess, my dears, that I dreamed of it all night."

"That is not astonishing; when anything has violently startled us during the day, our imagination reverts to it in sleep, and we dream of the same object. But that is not to say that one need have sad presentiments."

"Truly, mamma, you make me feel anxious," said Adeline. "I wish already that Edouard had returned. But, after all, one must be childish to fear without reason. Go then, my dear, return as quickly as possible, and in any case do not dine at the Crowned Sword."

Edouard kissed Madame Germeuil's hand and embraced his wife as one embraces the woman of his choice on the day after his marriage, when one finds her even dearer and sweeter than one had anticipated.

He arrived at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges, and

alighted from his carriage in front of the house which, in a few moments more, would belong to him.

"Is M. Renâré in?" he inquired of the concierge.

"He has gone to the notary's, sir."

"The deuce! he's very prompt; I must not keep him waiting."

Murville left his carriage in the court of the house and went to the notary's. The deed was ready, and M. Renâré impatiently awaited the arrival of his purchaser; for, having learned the evening before of the adventure at the Crowned Sword, he had become somewhat anxious as to the conclusion of his bargain; but Edouard's presence and the sight of a pocketbook filled with crisp bank notes restored his tranquillity.

The deed being signed, and the money paid over, M. Renâré smilingly gave Edouard the keys of the house.

"You are the owner, monsieur; and the house and all it contains are at your disposal, since I have sold it to you furnished."

"Thank you, monsieur; but you may take all the time necessary to make your preparations for leaving; I do not wish to inconvenience you in any way."

"Oh, monsieur, my preparations can be speedily completed. I have nothing to do but pack a small valise, which I can carry under my arm."

"You have, then, another dwelling in view?"

"Oh," said the notary, "M. Renâré has six houses in Paris, and three others in the suburbs; thus he will not be at all at a loss."

"Six houses in Paris!" said Edouard to himself; "and he wears a faded coat, and a hat with a hole in it, and he is a bachelor, and has no one to inherit it; he believes, I suppose, that he will never die."

Our young man bowed to the old miser, left the notary's, and returned to his new property. The porter waited in the court, and appeared to wish to say something to him; Edouard divined the subject of his embarrassment.

"This house is now mine," said he to the peasant; "here is the deed which constitutes me its master; besides, M. Renâré has no doubt informed you himself."

"Oh, monsieur, I knew something about it—"

"Are you in M. Renâré's service?"

"No, monsieur; I am only attached to the house, and if monsieur does not keep me I shall be in the street."

"Very well; I will keep you. I do not wish to send away anyone; from this moment you are in my service."

"That is all I could have hoped for, monsieur; I will try to please you."

The villager was not very pleasing to Edouard. This peasant seemed coarse and rough, and in

living with M. Renâré he had contracted the air of suspicion which ruled all his actions.

But Edouard, in returning to dwell in the home of his parents, did not wish to bring evil upon any one of the villagers.

It was still early, and as Edouard had finished his business with the notary more quickly than he expected, he could not resist the temptation of passing a few moments in looking over his property. He ordered the porter to give him the key of the gate at the end of the garden, from whence he could gain his carriage more quickly.

When one knows that a property belongs to him he examines all its details with special attention. Edouard observed that M. Renâré had planted cabbages and salad in the squares of the garden formerly reserved for flowers. He had cut down the beautiful acacias which only provided shade, and had replaced them with fruit trees; instead of box to border the pathways, he had sown parsley and nasturtiums. Finally, as he entered a shrubbery which had once been carpeted with lilacs and roses, Edouard could detect nothing but the odor of chervil and onions.

"We shall have to make a good many changes here," said Edouard to himself, smiling at the parsimony of the old proprietor. "But in a week everything will be as before; at least, with the exception of the acacias. I had my swing fastened to them; but I have passed the age for swings."

He was then at the end of the garden; he approached the iron gate.

"It seems that the terrible head that so frightened the ladies does not show itself every day," he said to himself, and he prepared to put the key in the lock; just then the mustached visage appeared above the broken plank, immediately before his eyes.

Edouard paused; he felt his heart beat violently; but he recovered himself quickly.

"What do you want, monsieur?" he said to the unknown; "and why are you constantly behind the gate, gazing into these gardens?"

"I do not want anything," replied the stranger brusquely, in an emphatic voice. "I look at the gardens because it pleases me to do so, and I gaze through this grating because no one has given me permission to walk about inside."

"If you wish to enter the garden, you may do so. Come in, monsieur; nothing prevents you."

As he said this, Edouard, who was curious to see the stranger's figure, opened the iron gate which led into the fields.

The unknown seemed surprised at Edouard's courtesy. He did not wait for a second invitation, but came into the garden. Murville could thus study him at his ease. He saw a tall man, dressed in an old blue overcoat buttoned up to the chin, wearing much-faded black gaiters, and holding in his hand an old three-cornered hat.

As he examined this singular personage, whose pale face, long beard and careless dress seemed to indicate misery and misfortune, Edouard remembered his mother-in-law's suspicions, and a feeling of distrust came into his mind.

The stranger walked about the garden, pausing now and then before a bit of shrubbery or an old tree, and seeming to forget that anyone was near him.

"Zounds!" said Edouard to himself. "I shall not gain anything by my complaisance; yet I must know who this man is, and why he plants himself behind the gate. Come; since he says nothing, I'll open the conversation; he must at least answer."

The stranger had seated himself on a bank of grass, from which he could see the front of the house. Edouard drew near and sat down beside him.

"Oh, pardon me, monsieur," said the unknown, rousing himself from his reflections. "I did not remember to thank you for your kindness. But I was lost in thought at seeing these places once more."

"Oh, that is a matter of no moment."

"Are you the son of the owner of this house?"

"No."

"So much the better for you."

"Why do you say that?"

"Because he is an impertinent old miser, and

his porter is just as bad. I shall teach him a good lesson if I live long enough."

"What have they done to you?"

"I came to this village especially to visit this house. I reached here yesterday, overcome with fatigue, and, entering the court, sat down on a stone bench to rest. The porter came to me and asked me why I was there. I told him I wished to visit the gardens. He asked if I wanted to buy the house. That question was in itself an impertinence, for I do not look like a person with money to invest."

"That's true enough," said Edouard to himself.

"When he learned that I had no intention of buying, he ordered me to leave the place. I besought him to let me go into the gardens just for a few moments. He called his master. An old Jew appeared, and the two wanted to put me out. Thousand thunders! Put me out!—me, a—But, no; I forget that I am that no more. It's all the same. Had it not been for the old memories which arose in me, I should have beaten the master and his valet. I did not do it, however, and as I could not see the place, except in perspective, I planted myself outside that gate, where you saw me yesterday."

"I am pleased to have it in my power to atone for the discourtesy of the porter, and pleased to find you today in the same place."

"My faith! it was a mere chance. Had I not expected a comrade to meet me, I should not have waited here so long."

"Ah! you are awaiting a comrade?"

"Yes, monsieur."

Edouard was silent for a moment, lost in reflection on what the unknown had said to him. The stranger recommenced the conversation.

"Pardon, monsieur, if I in turn ask you a question. How happens it that the old rascal of a proprietor gave you the keys of his garden?"

"This house no longer belongs to M. Renâré. I bought it today."

"You bought it! O good Heavens! I am delighted to learn it. It distressed me to see this dwelling in the clutches of such an old screw."

"You seem to be very fond of this house."

"I should be. I passed part of my youth here."

"You!"

"Yes, I."

Edouard looked at the stranger with more attention; vague suspicions, a secret presentiment, made his heart tremble. He noticed that the unknown was really a young man, and that the ageing of his features was apparently due only to fatigue and exposure to the sun. He wished, and yet he feared, to learn more about him.

"Yes, monsieur," repeated the stranger, after a moment's silence, "I have lived in this house;

I was partly brought up here; then (I was with my parents) — then the sun shone happily for me. I had a good father; I had a brother. I left them all, and I deserve what has happened to me since."

"Are your parents dead?" said Edouard in a scarcely audible voice.

"Yes, monsieur; they are dead — perhaps from the sorrow I caused them. My mother, however, was never very fond of me; but my father loved me, and I shall never more see him. Oh, cursed obstinacy, that has made me commit so many follies!"

"And your brother?"

"My brother, they tell me, is in Paris; he has just been married, I understand. I have not yet obtained his address, but I shall get it tomorrow and then I shall hunt him up. Poor Edouard! He will be greatly surprised to see me. I'll wager he believes me dead."

Edouard did not answer; he dropped his eyes, uncertain as to what he ought to do, not daring to reveal himself to the brother whom he had just discovered.

Jacques — for it was indeed he — was again lost in his reflections; with one hand he caressed his long mustache, with the other he rubbed his forehead as if to render his ideas clearer.

Edouard sat motionless and silent; his eyes rested upon the friend of his infancy; but the ill-fitting overcoat, the old gaiters, and especially the

long beard, repressed the impulse of his heart, which prompted him to throw himself into his brother's arms, regardless of his dress, or his unfortunate condition.

Suddenly a new idea struck Jacques' imagination. He turned suddenly to Edouard.

"Monsieur," he said, "it is not impossible that you know my brother. You have the appearance of a society man, and you live ordinarily in Paris."

"That is true."

"Have you heard Edouard Murville spoken of?"

"Yes; I know him."

"You know my brother?"

"I am he; I am Edouard Murville."

Edouard pronounced these words in so feeble a voice that no one save Jacques could have heard them; but the latter listened attentively, and before his brother had finished the phrase he fell upon his neck and pressed him in his arms.

Edouard allowed himself to be embraced with sufficiently good grace, though the cursed mustaches annoyed him somewhat. He did not feel at his ease, and hardly knew whether to be rejoiced or chagrined at having found his brother.

"But why didn't you tell me sooner?" cried Jacques, embracing Edouard anew. "Did you not divine that it was I?"

"Almost; but I wished to be certain."

"And you? You are prosperous — happy?"

"Oh, yes."

"You are married? Where is your wife? I shall have much pleasure in making her acquaintance."

"My wife —"

Edouard was silent. The remembrance of Adeline, of Madame Germeuil, and of the suspicions the latter had formed on the previous evening, on seeing the mustached face; the brusque manners; the more than negligent dress of Jacques, so strongly contrasting with his own, — all these things troubled the young man's mind; feeble and irresolute of character, he sought vainly to reconcile his self-respect with the feelings to which the sight of his brother had given birth.

"What the devil are you thinking of?" exclaimed Jacques, pulling Edouard by the arm.

"Oh, I was reflecting. — I shall make myself late; it is necessary I should return to Paris; important business necessitates my presence there."

Jacques made no response, but the blood rushed to his brow, and he withdrew a few steps from his brother.

"And you, Jacques, — what are you going to do now?"

"Nothing," said Jacques in a dry tone, considering Edouard closely.

"Nothing! What are your means of existence?"

"Up to the present I have asked nothing of anybody."

"But you do not look prosperous."

"I am not, in truth."

"The idea of wearing such mustaches! You don't intend to come and see my wife with those, I suppose."

"I shan't shave my mustaches; if your wife is a snob, and the sight of me frightens her, rest assured, she will not see me very often."

"You misunderstand me; that is not what I wished to say. — But — it is necessary that I leave you; they are awaiting me in Paris. I cannot offer to take you with me now. Besides, you have an appointment with someone in this village, I believe."

"Yes, I expect a comrade, — a friend."

Jacques emphasized this last word and looked expressively at his brother.

"Well, I must leave you," said Edouard, after a moment's hesitation. "We shall see each other again soon, I hope. In the mean while — Wait! Here; take this."

Saying these words Edouard drew out his purse, which contained about ten louis, and offered it to his brother with a trembling hand; but Jacques proudly pushed Edouard's hand away, pulled his hat down over his eyes, and lifted his right hand to his coat, as though wishing to uncover his chest; but he paused, and addressed Edouard coldly.

"Keep your money," said he; "I did not come to ask help from you, nor do I intend to be the

object of your charity. I hoped to find a brother; I have been deceived. You do not consider me worthy to be received at your home. My dress and my looks frighten you. That is enough; you will see me no more."

Jacques cast an angry glance at his brother, and with great strides left the garden by the little gate, which had remained open.

Edouard, like all irresolute people, stood motionless in his place, his eyes fixed upon the gate through which his brother had disappeared. Suddenly natural feeling overcame him. He ran to the grating, and took some steps into the field, calling loudly, "Jacques! Brother!"

But it was too late; Jacques had disappeared — was already far away, and his brother's voice could not reach him.

Edouard sorrowfully reëntered the garden; he paused at the gate, looking out over the fields; but he could see no one, and he decided to close the gate.

"Oh, he will come back," said he to himself; "he is hot-tempered and is easily angered. However, I did not believe that he would take offence. I offered him money, of which he appeared in great need, and I do not see why he should take exception to that. I made him understand that his dress, his bearing, would be out of place in a drawing-room. Was I so very wrong? Could I in conscience present to my wife and her mother

a man who looks as though he had escaped from prison at least? I should die of shame — and on the day following my marriage. With the money I offered him he could have clothed himself decently. But, no; he will not give up his mustaches. Well, as he pleases. I have done all I could."

Edouard tried to convince himself that he was not in the wrong; he would not confess that his cold, formal manner had humiliated his brother. But a secret voice rose from the depths of his conscience and reproached him with his fault. Ill-pleased with himself, he resolved to say nothing of the meeting with his brother.

He reached home; Adeline ran to meet him, scolding at the length of his absence, and asking for news of his journey.

"Everything is settled," replied Edouard; "the deed is signed, and the pretty house is now ours."

"And you did not meet any bad characters?" said Adeline, smiling.

"Why, no. You see —"

"You did not see the terrible head with the mustaches?" asked Madame Germeuil.

"No; I didn't see him."

"All the better; to tell the truth, that man had the appearance of a robber chieftain, and for my part I am not anxious to see him again, I assure you."

Edouard reddened; his brother looked like a

bandit, they said. That thought troubled him; he was afraid they would divine his secret; he dared not raise his eyes. However, his wife's kisses lessened his uneasiness.

"What is the matter, dear?" said Adeline to him. "You seem preoccupied today."

"Nothing is the matter; the wearisomeness of being so long away from you is my only trouble."

"Dear Edouard, may you always feel the same, for then you will never leave me. Ah, when shall we go to the country?"

"In a week."

"A week! That's very long."

"It is necessary to allow the old owner time to make new arrangements."

"Yes; that's right, dear."

Edouard did not speak the truth; another reason made him delay his return to Villeneuve-Saint-Georges. This reason he did not dare to divulge to Adeline. After forty-eight hours of marriage, after having promised themselves full reciprocal confidence, this husband already had secrets from his wife.

CHAPTER V

Do Not Judge By Appearances

Let us leave Edouard and the charming Adeline for a short time, and return to Frere Jacques, with whom it is necessary that we should form a more intimate acquaintance.

On leaving the garden of his father's old home in the abrupt manner we have described, Jacques had plunged into the country, and, blind with grief and resentment, had walked for a long time without seeing anything around him, without troubling himself as to which road he should take, his only object being to increase the distance between himself and his brother, whose cold and unfraternal manners and speech had wounded the honest soldier.

From time to time Jacques allowed a few words to escape from the depths of his troubled heart — always a good and affectionate one even in his most heedless days; he raised his eyes, stamped his feet violently, and appeared scarcely able to master his agitation.

On reaching a beautiful vale which was shaded by old walnut trees, he felt the need of rest, and looked all about him, as if to assure himself that

nobody had followed him ; all was quiet, peaceful. The villagers, employed with their work in the fields, were the only signs of animation in the countryside. Jacques seated himself at the foot of a walnut tree and reviewed the conversation he had had with Edouard.

" Because I appeared unfortunate he treated me with disdain. Because I had mustaches he did not dare present me to his wife. He offered me money, but did not invite me to live near him. Is that the way one should treat his brother? Why that scornful air? Have I dishonored the name of my father? If my manners are a trifle rough, my speech is frank and my conscience clean. I may be poor, unsuccessful; but never — no, never — have I committed an action for which I should blush. I have perpetrated follies in the heedlessness of youth — that is true; but I have nothing shameful with which to reproach myself; and that which lies there — on my breast — should guarantee me from all reproach and prevent me from ever meriting it."

Jacques opened his overcoat and contemplated with pride a cross of honor suspended from an old uniform vest which he wore underneath. This reward of his valor was his only consolation ; however, he had concealed his decoration because for some days he had been compelled to ask hospitality of the peasants, who sometimes grudge it, and he would not expose his cherished cross to humili-

ation. He was right; it is not necessary that a man should carry a badge of respectability in order that he may be an object of charity to others.

Jacques had fixed his eyes upon his decoration; he remembered the day on which his colonel had placed it upon his breast; he recalled his combats; he was again on the field of battle, surrounded by his comrades. The memory of past glory reanimated his bruised spirit and he forgot his sorrow and his brother's coldness.

At that moment a young man dressed something like Jacques, but with a lively and animated countenance, expressive of anything but sorrow or need, descended a hillock which led to the valley, whistling a military march and marking time by beating with his stick the currant and lilac bushes which bordered the way.

On reaching the valley the traveller paused, and looked about him on every side. "What the devil! Not an inn; not even a cheap little refreshment booth. Ah, can it be that I am mistaken? I see no more of a village here than there is in my pocket — and I am possessed with thirst. Come; it's all right. Forward!" And he refreshed himself by singing, —

"I have seen Jeanneton
The tiny-footed little one;
I have even seen her —

"Ah! There's someone at last. Halloo, my friend!" The traveller addressed Jacques; the

latter raised his eyes and recognized his faithful comrade; he ran to him, crying, —

"Ah, is it you, my poor Sans-Souci?"

"What! comrade Jacques! Pardieu! Well met! Wait; I will rest near you under the shade of that walnut; I should prefer to be under the shade of a hogshead of Burgundy. But it's all right; one must adjust one's self to all circumstances."

"Always the same, Sans-Souci. Always the same gay, jolly fellow."

"Oh, as to that, I've not changed; gayety is current coin with poor devils like us. I sing under fire as well, you know. Now we are — Wait; what do you call it?"

"Disbanded."

"Yes; that's it, — disbanded; and, in place of being soldiers, here we are, transformed into civilians. Ah, well; it's necessary to take a stand; besides, we are always well conducted, and if it is necessary some day to defend one's country, then — forward!"

"Yes; but while waiting for war how shall we live?"

"Like other people, — by working."

"My poor Sans-Souci, there are those living in the lap of luxury without giving themselves the least trouble; and others who, with the best inclination to work, cannot find enough of it to earn a living."

"Bah! you always look on the dark side. Has your journey been unsuccessful? You had an object in coming to this part of the country?"

"Oh, I found more than I expected."

"And you are not satisfied?"

"I have no cause to be. I came to see my brother. He treated me like a beggar."

"Your brother is a queer dog. I'd give him some strokes with the flat of my sword if I still had one."

"My dress, my face, my long beard, — all displeased him."

"It's very unfortunate. He did not see your cross of honor?"

"No; it was hidden, and I am very glad of it; my brother is incapable of appreciating it, and I hope some day to make him blush for his conduct towards me."

"Is he a rich man?"

"Yes."

"In society?"

"Yes."

"You are of a good family, then?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Ah, that is what I am not; I never knew either father or mother; I am a natural child. But that does not prevent me from holding my head up; the sprees of my ancestors don't concern me; and then, besides, in the time of our first parents there were no attorneys, which, however,

did not prevent the descendants of Cain from being very much respected in society. Besides, our sergeant, a pretty clever man when he was not tipsy, told me that love children ordinarily make their way better than other people, and thereupon he quoted a whole string of names which I have forgotten. But to go back to what we were saying: you never spoke to me of your family or of your adventures; we knew each other in the regiment; we have been through several campaigns together; we both had the jaundice in Spain and frozen feet in Russia, all of which cemented our friendship. You received the cross and I did not; that is the only difference betwixt us. But you richly deserved it; you saved the life of our colonel,— brave man!— but that did not prevent his being killed the next day; unfortunately, you could not always be near him. Then after many adventures they disbanded us; it was a great pity, because perhaps we should have become marshals of France. To console ourselves we remained together, except that you came alone to this village, while I went into the suburbs to look for a little brunette whom I formerly courted, and who had vowed to be faithful to me,— as unshaken as a cannonball."

"Well, did you find your little brunette?"

"Yes, by Jove! Oh, I tell you our destinies are analagous. While your brother was giving you such a gracious reception, my beauty came to

meet me with three children hanging to her skirts, and another on the way. Of course I could say nothing to that, because the poor little thing had thought I was dead; and while the children paddled with the ducks, and her husband cut wood, we made peace and parted good friends, and I came on here."

"Poor Sans-Souci! The women are no better than the men, only they are usually a trifle less adroit in concealing their infidelity. There! I have learned to know the world, and I ought to have divined the reception my brother would give me. But one always hopes, and that is where the mistake lies."

"Come, let us see; tell me of your adventures. We are in the fresh air; no one can hear us or disturb us; and, as I listen to you, I will rest and smoke a cigar."

"Very well; I will tell you what has happened to me since the age of fifteen, for it was at that period that I began my wanderings."

Jacques buttoned his overcoat, leaned his back against the walnut trees, and prepared to relate his adventures to his comrade; while the latter, taking a steel from his pocket, obtained a light for his cigar, which he placed gravely in his mouth, in order to listen with enjoyment.

"I left the paternal mansion at fifteen. My mother did not seem to love me much, and pronounced my name with repugnance. However, I

remember a stout fatherly man, with pleasant manners, who came often to our house, and who called me Jacques with all the strength of his lungs. I believe, in fact, that this stout papa was my godfather, and that he was named Jacques also. It is certain that he seemed to love me dearly, and that every time he visited me he gave me toys and bonbons. But, despite the good offices of my godfather, the caresses of my father and the friendship I felt for my brother, I wearied of my home. I could not be quiet a moment. I had no taste for study, and as I thought only of running about the world and fighting, I did not see the necessity of learning Latin and mathematics. Ah, my dear Sans-Souci, I have already paid for these errors of my youth. I have learned at great expense that education is always a wonderful resource, no matter in what situation one finds one's self. Had I had some education, I should not have remained a mere private; and, besides, even had my valor raised me to the rank of captain, it is always unpleasant for one to find himself in the society of his superiors, unable to open his mouth for fear of making some blunder that will provoke derision. But, to go on with my story: I started one fine morning, with neither drum nor trumpet, and without troubling myself as to which road I should take. I had a louis in my pocket, which I had received some days before from my godfather; and I imagined that it would last forever.

"After walking for a long time, I stopped before an inn in a village; and, entering, I ordered a dinner with as much assurance as though I had been an emissary of the government. I was well dressed, had a frank and open countenance, and rattled my money as I sauntered into the kitchen and uncovered all the dishes to choose what would suit me. The landlord smiled at me, allowed me to do as I pleased, and served me a good dinner, with both white and red wine. A little hunchback, who was dining at a neighboring table, watched me closely, and tried to open a conversation with me, and to learn whence I came, and whither I was going; but I dislike curious people, and his questions displeased me; I looked at him without answering, and whistled and sang while he spoke.

"When I had sufficiently refreshed myself I asked for my bill. The rascal charged me fifteen francs for my dinner. I made a wry face, but I paid it and left the inn, reflecting that my louis, which was to last forever, would not suffice to pay for a second meal if I still wished to live like a lord. The place where I had dined, and which I had taken for a village, was Saint Germain. I asked the way, therefore, through the woods, and took up my march, interrupting my progress only to jump the ditches and hit with my cane the donkeys which I passed on my way.

"As I entered Poissy, I heard a horseman trot-

ting behind me. I paused, and recognized my hunchback, who was mounted on a lank pony, which he was obliged to goad constantly with whip and spur, without which the poor animal would have stopped at every step.

"He ceased to ply his whip as he drew near me, and was content to go at a walk, in order to keep alongside me. He tried to open a conversation; and as I was commencing to feel fatigued and the crupper of a horse, however lean, appeared to me an agreeable mount, I put away my pride and chatted with the hunchback.

"'Where are you going now, my dear boy?' he asked.

"'Oh, that I do not know exactly. I want to travel, to run about, to see the world and amuse myself.'

"'You have no parents?'

"'Oh, yes; but they are at Paris, and wished me to spend my time in reading and writing; that bored me, and so I came away.'

"'I understand. It is a foolish trick, an escapade of youth. Oh, I know what that is; one sees a great deal of it nowadays. But have you any money for travelling expenses?'

"'I have still nine francs.'

"'Nine francs! Peste! You will have to do without eating.'

"'What do you mean by doing without eating? I have eaten chicken, eels, pigeon and duck.'

"'Yes; but you spent fifteen francs, and with the nine you have left you will not be able to have three more meals like that.'

"I made no reply, but I comprehended that the hunchback was right; still, as I was a boy of determination, and had made my decision, I looked at the little man with a stubborn air, and said to him after a moment, —

"'Well, then, I will do without eating.'

"'I see you have courage,' he said to me. 'But really, when one can find an opportunity to live well and travel at the same time, it is not to be disdained; and I myself can furnish you the means of doing this.'

"'You?'

"'Yes, I myself.'

"'But how?'

"'I will tell you. But, in order to listen at your ease, and avoid fatigue, will you not mount behind me?'

"'Oh, I should like nothing better.'

"Delighted at the proposition of my new travelling companion, I sprang, like a heedless fellow, upon the poor horse. I slipped, caught at the little man's hump, fell, dragged him with me, and we rolled upon the ground. Fortunately, his gentle charger did not budge.

"My new acquaintance picked himself up good-naturedly, and contented himself with desiring me to be less impetuous in future, since we might

not always fall so softly. I promised him, and my hunchback put his foot in the stirrup and bestrode his horse. I also remounted, but cautiously, and when we had settled ourselves, and he had administered a few cuts of the whip to persuade his sorry jade to return to her pacing, he took up his discourse where I had so brusquely interrupted it.

"'My dear friend, everyone in this world seeks to acquire money and make a fortune; at least this is the case if one is not born rich; still, one sees millionaire bankers busied in speculating; capitalists undertaking great enterprises, to double their funds; and nobles seeking alliances which will add to the splendor of their houses. As for me, since I am neither a nobleman nor a capitalist, nor even a broker,—and I have no hope of ever becoming one of these things,—I have sought for a long time a way in which I could, if not make a fortune, at least live at my ease. I have lately discovered this means. With observation one can easily learn to know men. I have travelled, I have studied their tastes, their characters. I have seen that, with a little dexterity, poor human beings are easily deceived; it is only necessary to learn their weak point, which one may easily divine when, like me, possessed of tact and penetration.'

"'Ah, you have tact and penetration,' said I to my companion, pricking the thighs of our charger

with some pins which I had discovered in the carpet bag which was between us.

"'Yes, my dear; I can boast of that.'

"'Why, then, is our horse going more quickly now?'

"'Because I have been snapping my whip, and he knows that it will soon be supper time.'

"'That's right; I see you have tact. But go on; I am listening to you.'

"'It is, then, in flattering the passions that I have found a way to live at my ease; moreover, I am skilled in botany, medicine, chemistry, and even in anatomy; and, with my science, I have compounded not only remedies for all diseases, but also some philters to produce love, hatred or jealousy, and to make sick people out of well ones; it is, above all, in the last particular that I excel.'

"'Ah, I understand now. You sell herb medicine, like the tall man in red whom I have seen in Paris on the squares and street corners. I believe that they call him a quack.'

"At the word 'quack,' my companion started in his saddle so that I thought he would overturn both of us in the road; fortunately I had a strong hold of him, and we experienced nothing worse than fright.

"'My dear boy,' he said to me, when he had grown a little calmer, 'I forgive your use of the word "quack." You do not know me yet; I

confess, besides, that there may be a little charlatanism in my trade, and that three-quarters of my remedies do not have the effect which people expect; but one is deceived in medicine as in everything else. One takes pills and makes one's self ill, or has toothache and uses a remedy which ruins all his other teeth; one looks for employment without knowing how to do anything; or embarks on maritime speculations which are ruined by a storm at sea; or believes himself clever, and can succeed in nothing, which is the greatest matter after all; or wishes to be wise, and commits nothing but follies; or wishes to be happy, and gets him a wife and children, who cause him a thousand anxieties. Thus, my little man, one is deceived in everything, and it is by great good luck only that events transpire as we have expected or hoped.'

"'Ah, that will do, monsieur,' said I to my little hunchback, of whose twaddle I was growing wearied; 'these things being considered, what do you want me to do?'

"'This: when I stop in a town or a small city, I cannot, when alone, make myself known; it is necessary for me to have a pupil to run about the town and distribute my handbills, and, when I am engaged, answer inquiries and take note of what people desire of me.'

"'But I don't wish to be your pupil, since I have no desire to learn anything.'

"'I understand very well, my friend; oh, I don't wish to bother your head with anything very tiring. I want you to make pills — that's all.'

"'Make pills?'

"'Yes; all sorts of sizes and colors. Don't be afraid; it isn't difficult. But that is not all.'

"'What shall I have to do beside?'

"'You must go to sleep at will, and play the somnambulist when it shall be necessary.'

"'Go to sleep! Ah, that's the very thing. I can do that finely.'

"'You will answer, while sleeping, any questions put to you.'

"'If I sleep, how can I answer you?'

"'But you will only pretend to be asleep, my boy. I will explain all that to you. Oh, that is one of the principal branches of my business.'

"'When you put others to sleep?'

"'Oh, no, but when I make somnambulists speak, and make them give remedies to sick persons.'

"'Wait a minute; I'll go to sleep for you, but I don't want to give remedies or to take them; they've often whipped me for that at my father's.'

"'Oh, you shan't take any remedies; these are merely medicaments which they take —'

"'With a syringe. Oh, I know all about that.'

"'I tell you there is no question of that. You will speak while playing the somnambulist. I will

teach you how to do it beforehand, and you will answer all sick or curious persons.'

"'Well, I don't understand it at all.'

"'By Jove! I believe you. Those who question the somnambulist understand no better, and that is precisely what makes the charm of the thing. If they knew to what they lent themselves, it would be impossible to gain a living by magnetism and somnambulism. Finally, will you accompany me, and aid me in my enterprises? I will give you good food, and clothe you properly; and you will see the world, for I cannot remain long in the same neighborhood.'

"'And for that it will be necessary to do nothing but make pills and go to sleep?'

"'Nothing more.'

"'Then it is settled; I will go with you.'

"Thus I became the companion of the little hunchback. By night we reached a village. My conductor sought the best quarters, and ordered a good supper. It seemed to me very comfortable to travel on horseback, without needing to trouble myself about my meals; besides, I was still my own master, and could quit my new companion whenever it pleased me to do so; and this alone sufficed to content me with my position. The certitude of freedom gives a charm to existence, and diffuses its sweetness over the slightest circumstances of life. Slavery, on the contrary, casts a shade of sadness over most of our actions; it drives away

pleasure, and takes the charm from love, all strength from the mind, and all liveliness from the imagination.

"This reflection, Sans-Souci, is not my own; 'tis a phrase which my godfather often repeated to me, and which I remember, because it harmonizes with my own taste.

"When we awakened the next morning my hunchback, who called himself Graograicus,—a name which he had probably manufactured for himself,—proposed that he should give me a lesson in somnambulism, which we should put in practice at the first place of any importance at which we should stop. I accepted the proposition. He made me sit down, desired me to look at him fixedly without appearing to see anything, and at last taught me to sleep with the eyes open; still, as that fatigued the eyelids, he permitted me to close my eyes when surrounded only by peasants or the poor devils who came to be cured.

"Next came the question of the philters; my companion had exhausted his stock and was urgent in the preparation of new ones; while I cleaned about fifteen little phials which should serve to hold the charms, Master Graograicus went into the village to seek herbs, roots and other ingredients which were necessary for the concoction of the philters. He lit a fire and borrowed all our host's porringers and basins; and our apartment, where everything was upside down,

became, in the language of my companion, a laboratory of chemistry and magic.

"'And when all is done,' said I to my hunchback, as he stirred the burdock and I pounded the cinnamon, 'what is the use of that which we are preparing? I wish to be your partner, but only on condition that you impart your secrets to me.'

"'You shall know them, my boy; we will have no secrets between us. I am now compounding a love philter. This is not difficult to make; it is only necessary to use some spirituous and stimulating tonics. I shall boil together some cinnamon, cloves, vanilla, pepper, sugar and brandy; when the patient has swallowed that he becomes very amorous, and very little causes him to seek the object of his flame; thus it is evident that the charm works, and no one doubts that I am a sorcerer. Moreover, this little drug has the effect of decaying the teeth, which causes suffering, and so lovesickness is vulgarly denominated toothache; and when it is known that the individual who has tasted my philters is affected with the latter, it is supposed that he is smitten with someone. I sell a great deal of this philter, especially to ladies; we must make enough of it.

"'Let us pass on to the one which provokes jealousy. Ah, I confess that cost me long study and profound reflection, but I believe that I have attained success. From what is jealousy generated?

From the suspicions which one conceives as to the fidelity of a loved object. These suspicions have a cause, for there is no effect without a cause. One is sometimes jealous without reason, but in most cases there is reason for it. Judging from that, I said to myself, "In causing one lover to be unfaithful I shall necessarily render the other jealous; but how make an individual unfaithful who has not taken my drops?" Ah, it is just there, my little man, that a trace of genius was necessary. A stupid fellow would never have discovered what I have done, and I did it myself without the aid of a medical treatise. I have compounded this philter of several sublimates mixed with simples which affect the skin. This charm has the property of rendering the eyes dull, the skin leaden and the nose drawn. It produces a humor, and causes a quantity of festers and pimples of all sizes to burst from the skin, and it makes the breath offensive enough to kill flies ten feet away. You realize that he or she who approaches the person who has taken my philter easily becomes unfaithful, while the individual who has taken my balm becomes as jealous as a demon, and is so for the rest of his life; for he will fare well if he succeed in pleasing and inspiring love after that. Eh, what do you say to that? What calculation! What depth! What knowledge of the passions and their effects! Well, you see what the world is. I sell much less of these philters than of the

others; it is very rare that a person takes them twice.

"'As to this last, for which I am stirring this burdock, it serves to incite anger, hatred, bad humor, and it never fails of its effect. It is composed of manna, rhubarb, vinegar, terebinth and cocoa, which I reduce to syrup with this burdock. This little charm, at once laxative and astringent, produces colic and headache. Now, when one has headache and stomach ache at the same time, one is not apt to be in a good-humor; he is easily excited to anger, and feels like fighting the whole world, especially when the pain augments, and rises to a crescendo. I hope that this is well reasoned, that my tact and penetration were necessary in discovering a means of arousing the different passions.'

"I listened to my companion with attention, and when he had finished I asked him if he intended to try his philters upon me; he assured me that he had no such purpose, and this declaration restored my good-humor, for I would not have been willing at any price to taste the charms of Maitre Graograicus.

"'I have now,' said he, 'only to teach you to compound the pills. It is very easy; I make them all of bread crumbs and roll them in different powders to give them various colors.'

"'And of what use are they?'

"'To cure all diseases.'

"'What! you can cure diseases with bread crumbs?'

"'I heal them sometimes, for many maladies exist only in the imagination, and when the sick person believes that he is taking an infallible remedy, he is persuaded that it will do him good, and it is this conviction which heals him, not my pills; but at least these can do no harm, and that is always something. I sell a considerable number of them to nurses and to old women.'

CHAPTER VI

A Lesson in Magnetism

"I was now in the full possession of all the secrets of my companion's business, and had sworn that I would never betray him; but I had not sworn that I would refrain from amusing myself at the expense of those foolish people who came to consult him; and, indeed, I intended to do this very thoroughly; for, though I was only fifteen years old, I was bold, courageous, wilful, and somewhat of a wag, for I possessed a keen sense of humor.

"The village in which we had passed the night afforded no opportunity for the exercise of my master's talents, or for the sale of his drugs. My cunning companion, however, managed to pass off on the landlady a box of pills which would prevent her hair from whitening and her teeth from becoming black.

"We therefore resumed our way, carrying our fortune fastened to the saddle of our horse. The weather was not propitious to us; we encountered a violent storm, were wet and bedraggled by the heavy rain and when we arrived at the small town which would soon resound with the story of

our marvellous talents, we were in such a wretched plight that we were much more likely to be taken for beggars than for learned doctors.

"We went, however, to the best inn in the neighborhood. The landlord paid no attention to us, and did not appear anxious to receive us; but when my companion asked for one of the best rooms in the house, and ordered dinner, the innkeeper looked at us doubtfully, and intimated his uncertainty as to our ability to pay our way. My crafty hunchback threw a handful of crowns on the table and invited our host to take payment in advance for a week's rent of our room.

"This way of introducing himself worked a marvellous change in the innkeeper's manner, who began to believe that he was dealing with noblemen travelling incognito. We were lodged on the first floor and served to the minute. 'Monsieur,' said my companion to our host, as we sat down to the table, 'you do not know who I am. I wish to make myself known for the good of the town; that you may inform the inhabitants of your neighborhood that they have sojourning amongst them, but for eight days only, the celebrated Graograicus, physician-in-chief to the Emperor of China, magnetic specialist to the favorite sultana of the Sultan of Damascus, physician by appointment to the King of Morocco, chemist to the Grand Vizier of Constantinople, and astrologer to the Hetman of the Cossacks. Say to them, moreover, that I

have with me, for the time being, a little somnambulist, the most famous, the most extraordinary, who has ever been seen on the face of the earth. He is a young man of thirty, who appears to be about fifteen, because he has passed half his life in sleeping. This singular young man, born on the banks of the Indus, knows all the languages. He does not speak them, it is true, but he understands them better than you and I. He divines in sleep your disease, its cause, its effects, the sufferings you experience, the periods of your illness, and indicates the remedies you should take, even for those maladies with which you may be attacked in the future. He has had the honor of putting himself to sleep before counts, earls, dukes, and even royal highnesses. He has effected cures, while sleeping, which would have been called miracles in great Solomon's reign, and even in the time of King Dagobert. He has cured an Englishman of the spleen, a German baroness of a cutaneous disease, and her husband of the gout, a young dancer of her hatred for the men, an old maid of her love for her dog, a courtier of the habit of bending his back, a capitalist of a weak stomach, a Prussian of an indigestion, an author of ringing in his ears, a musician of a weakness in his legs, an attorney of an itching in his fingers, a lawyer of a thickness in his tongue, a singer of shortness of breath, a coquette of hysterics, an old roué of his asthma, an Italian of the habit of whip-

ping his little boys, and many other personages whom I cannot mention, because it would take too long; and, besides, we are not quacks, who want to throw dust in people's eyes. The little prospectus which I beg you to distribute will suffice to give the inhabitants of this town an idea of our ability. Take it, my good host; take it, and believe me.'

"The host listened, and opened his eyes very wide, for the hunchback had spoken with extraordinary assurance and emphasis. He took the prospectus, bowing with great surprise, promised to do all he could to oblige us, tried to pronounce the name of my companion, made a very wry face over his failure, took off his hat, and backed out of our presence.

"When he had gone I asked my companion if I were supposed to be the somnambulist thirty years old, who had healed so many people.

"'Yes, my dear boy,' he said to me; 'be astonished at nothing. I will answer for all. You tell me your name is Jacques; but that name is too common. When we are in public I shall call you Tatouos — remember that. I am going to look about this town and take a few notes. While I am gone, amuse yourself by arranging my bottles in that chest, and by filling some boxes with pills. I shall return very soon.'

"I remained alone; but, instead of making pills, I amused myself by eating cocoa, cinnamon,

and various other ingredients which were used in the concoction of the so-called charms. I also examined the valise, which my companion had left open. I found a great black robe, an artificial nose, a wig made of dog grass, and a hempen beard, and was busied in examining these different objects when I was disturbed by a little knock at the door.

"'Come in,' I said, without pausing in my occupation. The door was opened very softly, and a young brunette, about twenty years old, entered our apartment. It was one of the maids of the inn, who was, like most of her kind, full of curiosity, and tolerably wise in the world's ways; and, hearing her master exclaim when he left our apartment that he had within his walls two of the most remarkable men in the world, — a savant, who treated the French like the Chinese, and a somnambulist thirty years old, who looked like a child of twelve, and who could put to sleep even the most wakeful people, — Clairette determined to be the first to test the charms of the wise men; and, supposing it would be very difficult to obtain an audience after our fame was spread abroad, she hastened to mount to our apartment under pretence of asking if we needed anything.

"The young girl came in on tiptoes, as though divided between fear and curiosity. She paused a few steps from me, and looked at me attentively, while I stared back at her and found her very

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" 'Monsieur, they say you are a somnambulist.'

" 'Oh, yes, I am.'

" 'And can you put everybody to sleep?'

" 'Only those who believe in my skill.'

" 'O monsieur! I believe in it sincerely; and if you would put me to sleep — It is that, perhaps, which makes one look young.'

" 'Yes; that is the commencement.'

" 'O monsieur! begin with me, I beg of you; that will at least be something done. Wait; if

pretty. I had as yet given no thought to women; besides, I had never before found myself tête-à-tête with a young girl. The presence of this one, the attention with which she examined me, and the pleasing expression of her countenance, moved me strongly, and produced in me a feeling I had never experienced before.

"We both preserved silence. Clairette was the first to break it.

"'Is it really true, monsieur,' she said, staring, 'that you are thirty years old?'

"'Yes, mademoiselle,' I answered immediately, remembering what my companion had said, and thinking that this fib might lead to some peculiar adventures. Besides, you know at fifteen a youth is pleased to appear older and wiser than he is, while at thirty he regrets that he is not still fifteen.

"'Oh, gracious! I should not have dreamed it. Thirty years! You don't appear half that age.'

"And Clairette examined me still more closely, while I looked at her and tried to play the agreeable.

"'Monsieur, do you possess a secret which prevents you from growing old?'

"'Yes, mademoiselle, and several others.'

"'O monsieur! if you could only teach me that secret, I should be so contented, so happy! Always to look young would be too delightful. I promise you that I would tell no one your secret.

Besides, I should not wish the other girls to find out how to remain young; it would not be half so nice. Monsieur, if you will be good enough to teach me this, you may ask of me anything you will.'

"The young servant appeared very strongly disposed in my favor. I felt a thousand desires arise in my soul, but I dared not breathe them to her. I was a novice in love, but I experienced an inclination to be so no longer, and also that Clairette should give me my first instructions.

"However, at thirty years of age one does not wish to appear ignorant, and, lest I should do or say something awkward, I remained silent, and contented myself with looking at Clairette.

"The young girl, astonished at my silence, thought at first that she had committed some indiscretion; however, her desire to remain young was so strong that presently she recommenced her questioning.

"'Monsieur, they say you are a somnambulist.'

"'Oh, yes, I am.'

"'And can you put everybody to sleep?'

"'Only those who believe in my skill.'

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"'Yes; that is the commencement.'

"'O monsieur! begin with me, I beg of you; that will at least be something done. Wait; if

you wish, now we are alone — and if you have the time — '

" ' What do you wish me to do? '

" ' Put me to sleep, monsieur; oh, I am all ready.'

" I was very much embarrassed; I did not understand what was necessary in order to play the sorcerer, and I much regretted at that moment that I had not asked my little hunchback for more ample details on that point. However, not wishing to refuse little Clairette, who begged me so sweetly, I said to myself, 'The deuce! I'm no stupider than my hunchback; and, since he has not taught me his way of putting people to sleep, I'll invent one of my own, and perhaps my way will be better than his.'

" ' Well, I consent,' said I to Clairette. ' I will give you a lesson.'

" ' Ah, monsieur, I will do everything you wish.'

" The young servant was so delighted at my conferring this favor upon her that she jumped about the room like a mad girl.

" ' First seat yourself,' I said to her, trying to assume an air of deep gravity.

" ' Where shall I sit, monsieur? '

" ' Why, here — on this chair, near me.'

" ' I am here, monsieur.'

" ' Give me your hand.'

" ' Oh, both, if you wish.'

"I took both her hands; I pressed them in mine; a sweet warmth ran through my being, and I felt so happy that I dared not move lest I should break the charm. My eyes were fixed on those of Clairette, and then I first knew what it is to love.

"In place of giving a lesson to the young girl, I felt that she was teaching me a thousand things; I trembled, I reddened and paled by turn; never was sorcerer more timid; but I had forgotten my rôle, and Clairette, without being aware of it, had taken mine.

"'It is astonishing,' said the young girl, when I had held her hands at least five minutes; 'but this does not put me to sleep at all.'

"'Wait, wait. It is not done all in a minute. It is necessary now to close your eyes.'

"'Bah! shut my eyes as tight as I can?'

"'Yes; that is indispensable.'

"'There! now I can see nothing.'

"Now that Clairette was no longer looking at me, I became less timid, and ventured to pluck a kiss from the lips of my pretty scholar. I found the first so sweet that I continued to take them, and Clairette allowed me, murmuring in broken ejaculations, —

"'Well, it is astonishing; but all this does not put me to sleep — not a bit.'

"I do not know how the first lesson would have ended if my companion had not suddenly entered

the room at the moment I was clasping Clairette in my arms. His appearance startled me so greatly that I made one jump to the other side of the room. Clairette appeared less embarrassed than I; she remained on her chair, looking first at me, then at the little hunchback, like one who is awaiting the issue of a new experience.

"'What are you about, my dear Tatouos?' said the mischievous hunchback, smiling; for he divined the cause of my embarrassment.

"'Oh — I — was putting this young girl to sleep.'

"'Ah, is that what you were doing? But you know very well that it is necessary to make certain indispensable preparations; and, besides, the time is not propitious. Believe me, you had better defer your lesson in magnetism until another moment.'

"While thus speaking, my companion made a sign which I understood admirably. He then approached Clairette, who remained quietly on her chair.

"'My dear child, it pleases me to see that you are ambitious to learn, and that you believe in our science. Be patient. Before long we will teach you more than you think — especially Seigneur Tatouos, who is extremely well versed in his art, and desires nothing better than to make converts. But this is not the time. Your master needs you in the kitchen; your fricassees will be spoiled, and I shall

be very angry, for I have a good appetite, and I do not like spoilt sauces and dried-up meats. Go, my dear, now; tomorrow we will begin our great experiences; and, if you are what I hope, you shall be initiated into our mysteries. Tomorrow you shall be put to sleep, and everything shall be made clear to you.'

"I do not know whether Clairette understood all that my companion said to her, but she dropped a deep courtesy and departed. In passing me she glanced at me with an expression that completely turned my head. I could no longer resist the feeling which I experienced for her, and, in spite of all that my colleague could say to me, I followed the young girl into the passage.

"'If you wish to learn all that I know,' I said to her, in a low tone, 'tell me where your room is, that I may be able to find you tonight.'

"'I ask nothing better. Well, you go to the top of the stairs; it's the first door to the right; besides, I will leave it ajar.'

"'That will be perfect.'

"'But you will teach me how to keep young—will you not?'

"'Certainly I will; don't worry yourself about that.'

"Clairette left me, and I returned to my companion.

"You will perceive that love had made me inventive; I had resolved to undertake everything

in order to pursue my affair with Clairette, and yet I was only fifteen years and a few months old; but decision of character, enterprise and robust health rendered me precocious in following an adventurous career.

CHAPTER VII

Jacques Puts Clairette to Sleep and Works Wonders. Remarkable Experiences of the Little Hunchback

"Upon returning to my travelling companion, who had now become my employer, I must confess that I expected to be somewhat severely reprimanded by him for my inconsiderate and reprehensible conduct with Clairette, the young servant of the inn, and I resolved to answer him by informing him that I would remain with him only on condition that I should be allowed in these private matters to follow my own will.

"However, I was spared the necessity of this course, and was very agreeably surprised by his laughing and coming gayly towards me.

"'It appears to me, my young comrade,' he said to me with a mischievous air, 'that you are already doing a little business on your own account. By Jove! that is commencing very young. However, I do not pretend to restrain you, having no authority as to personal matters in any way, because I am neither your tutor nor your father, and, moreover, you would not, I fear, be at all likely to listen to me if I should preach wisdom.

Permit me to give you only those counsels dictated by prudence and our common interests.'

"'I am listening to you.'

"'I do not lack penetration, and I believe you are in love with the young girl who was here just now.'

"'Truly, it did not require much penetration to discover that.'

"'But the thing essential is to find out if she likes you.'

"'Why should she not like me?'

"'You are so young.'

"'She thinks I am thirty years old.'

"'That's true; I didn't think of that. It is necessary, then, to turn the affair to our interest. You can easily understand, my dear Jacques, that, to have great success in a town, it is necessary to find accomplices.'

"'What! you can't do it yourself? You are not so very clever, after all.'

"'My little Jacques, you are commencing your frolics and your travels; you do not yet know the world; if you had studied it as I have, you would know that, in order to succeed, even the most cunning people often need the help of others, and that is what I mean by accomplices. Merchants act in concert to get a better price for their goods; the superintendent has an understanding with the contractors as to the payment of their accounts; courtiers conspire to flatter the prince

and conceal the truth from him; the young fop plans with an opera dancer to ruin the collector of revenues; the physician has an understanding with the apothecary, the tailor with the cloth merchant, the sewing-woman with the lady's maid, the playwright with the claquers, who, on their part, arrange among themselves to sell the tickets which are the price of their applause. The stock-jobbers combine to raise or lower the price of funds; the members of a cabal, to ruin the work of one who does not belong to their coterie; the musicians, to spoil the effect of the production of one of their confrères; actors, to prevent the staging of a play in which they have no part; while many wives have a very complete understanding with their husbands' friends. All that, my dear, is collusion; and is it necessarily astonishing that a trickmonger, a thimblerigger, has need of accomplices? All the worse for the foolish people who allow themselves to be taken in; or, rather, all the better, for if there were no illusion there would be less pleasure. As for me, I need to know in advance all about the persons who come to consult me; you understand by this time that I am no more of a sorcerer than any other man. And when you play the somnambulist, in order that you may divine the ills the patients are suffering from, and those they have already experienced, you must get your lesson beforehand. All that will not prevent us from curing them, please God;

but the multitude must be imposed on; men are so constituted that the marvellous pleases them, and will always please them. But as this little servant seems roguishly inclined, as well as wide-awake, we must make her our gossip; you will give her love and I shall give her money, and with those currencies we shall either be very unfortunate or very stupid if we do not use her to our own advantage.'

"I was delighted at the proposition of my companion, — that I should bestow my love upon Clairette, which was, indeed, my only desire, my only thought. However, as the little hunchback did not cease to recommend prudence and to urge me to take no proceedings without consulting him, I said nothing to him about my rendezvous with the young servant. He might have put an end to it very quickly, and for all the world I would not have missed that first meeting.

"Maitre Graograicus presently confided to me the result of his inquiries in the neighborhood; he was already familiar with its anecdotes, its intrigues, with the latest events, the nominations that were going to be made, the prevailing maladies, the prominent personages, what marriage engagements had been made, and those that had been broken, as well as everything else which occupied the dullards of the neighborhood. One must live in a small town to become in a short time acquainted with all the gossip; in order to

hear everything, it is only necessary to visit the baker's, the barber's and the fruiterer's. My companion had a great aptitude for remembering things which might prove useful to him; his memory was nearly always exact; with him it took the place of learning, as with many people it takes the place of wit.

"They served our supper, the landlord himself at first removing our covers and taking our orders. Clairette at last appeared, seeming less assured in her manner than on her first visit; she kept her eyes down and paid no attention to my expressive glances or to the mischievous smile of the little hunchback. I was on thorns; I feared that she had changed her sentiments and her mind; I was a novice in love and ignorant of the fact that a woman is most careful in hiding her feelings when she knows that they are about to be reciprocated.

"She departed, and I made all possible haste to finish my supper; but my companion, who was not in love, lingered over the delicacies and pleasures of the table. I was obliged to see him try every dish and to listen to his pleasantries on my lack of appetite, though he was far from suspecting the true cause of my preoccupation.

"Supper was finished at last, and we retired to our sleeping-room, where our two beds stood close together. I hastened to get into mine, putting my trousers at the foot, that I might find them more quickly. After taking a dozen turns in the

room and arranging his philters and pillboxes, which caused me to twitch with impatience, my companion decided to go to bed. I awaited the moment as a signal of my happiness, for I knew that once in bed he would sleep soundly.

"The moment so ardently desired approached; my comrade was in bed; assured that he was snoring, I rose hastily, drew on my trousers, and, without waiting to put on my shoes, ran to the door of our room. I opened it very softly, found myself on the stairs, and groped my way quietly, in my bare feet, holding my breath lest I should awaken the people of the inn and so lose the felicity I was about to experience.

"At last I reached the place designated; I was at the top of the stairs; I heard a slight cough, and my heart told me that I was near Clairette; in fact, I perceived a half-open door, and by the glimmer of a nightlight I espied the little servant waiting for me. The young girl was attired only in a petticoat and dressing-sack; but never had woman appeared to me so seductive, and never had one looked at me with such expressive glances.

"'I am waiting for you,' she said to me. 'Let us resume the lesson your companion so unfortunately interrupted. I am in a great hurry to see how you are going to rejuvenate me.'

"'You do not need to be rejuvenated,' I said to her; 'it is only necessary that you remain always as you are now.'

"'Yes; that is what I should like. Make haste. Shall I sit down and close my eyes, as I did before?'

"Without awaiting for my response, Clairette seated herself on the foot of the bed and I quickly seated myself beside her. Our magnetic séance had not proceeded very far when a loud noise was heard, apparently proceeding from the room beneath; we distinguished a confused murmur of voices, among others that of the innkeeper calling loudly for Clairette and demanding a light.

"Clairette quickly blew out the nightlight, for fear her master should discover our meeting; and while she was rubbing steel and flint to kindle another I slipped softly down the stairs, and had reached the landing below, when someone approached, seizing me by the arm, and whispered to me, 'Play the somnambulist; I was ill and got in the landlord's room by mistake. Keep your wits about you and I'll get you out of it.'

"Recognizing my companion's voice, I recovered my courage, and when at length our host appeared, bearing two lighted candles, and was about to enter his room, he perceived me gravely marching down the corridor in my shirt, carrying under my arm the trousers which I had not had time to put on.

"'What does this mean?' asked the landlord, examining me with surprise mingled with fear. 'What are you doing here, monsieur? What are

you seeking in the middle of the night? Was it you who came into my room and awakened me with your infernal noise? Answer me.'

"I was careful not to answer, and slowly continued my walk; the innkeeper followed me with his two candles in his hands, and Pierre and Jérôme, the two servants of the house, who had been drawn towards us by the noise, watched with curiosity the progress of the adventure. Presently a groan was heard from the innkeeper's chamber.

"'Ah, there's someone in my room,' cried the host, turning pale. 'Come with me, you others, and walk in front.'

"He pushed, in fact, Pierre and Jérôme, who entered the room where my companion had ensconced himself, leaving me in the passage. Presently I heard the voice of our host, who appeared very highly incensed at Maitre Graograicus. I judged that it was time to venture in to make peace, and I gravely entered the room where they were quarrelling. At sight of me the tumult subsided.

"'Hush! silence! Watch,' said my companion, in a low voice; 'it is Tatouos; he is in a somnambulistic trance. I will put him en rapport with me, and you shall see that he will tell us everything that I have done tonight.'

"As the little hunchback approached me he passed his hand several times before my face, and put his index finger to the end of my nose, in

order, as he said, to establish the harmony between us, and then began his questions.

"'What have I experienced tonight?'

"'You had pain in your stomach.'

"'What else?'

"'You had palpitation of the heart.'

"'What more?'

"'You were attacked by colic.'

"'Ah, what did I tell you a minute ago?' cried my companion, turning to the amazed audience.

"'But let's go on; all that is nothing; I told you he would tell everything I had done.—What caused this indisposition?'

"'Indigestion.'

"'And the indigestion?'

"'Was caused by eating too much supper.'

"'Astonishing! marvellous!' exclaimed our host, squeezing himself between his two men.

"'Hush!' said my companion; 'don't break the charm.—What did I do then?'

"'You got up.'

"'With what intention?'

"'To seek certain remedies.'

"'Did I take a light?'

"'No; you had none.'

"'And how did I walk?'

"'Gropingly.'

"'You hear, gentlemen; I walked gropingly because I had no light; he is not mistaken as to a single fact.—Where did I go?'

"'Down the corridor, but you turned back for something, and, forgetting that your room was on the left, you entered this room on the right.'

"'Correct, so far. What did I then do?'

"'You made a great noise by upsetting a table, on which was a soup tureen full of stock.'

"'Better and better.'

"'The noise awakened the landlord, who called out, and went to seek a light, and during that time you hid the soup tureen under the bed.'

"'Very good. Look and see if he is deceived on a single point.'

"The men, in fact, found the empty soup tureen. The host was stupefied; however, the loss of his stock, on which he had relied for the production of soup for the rest of the week, put him into a bad humor. My companion, who quickly perceived what troubled the innkeeper, again approached me.

"'What has been my intention since discovering my awkwardness?'

"'To give twelve francs to our host, as compensation for this disturbance.'

"'That's exactly it,—twelve francs I promised to you a few moments ago, to quiet your anger.'

"'No, monsieur; I can certify that you said not a word of it to me.'

"'No? Well, I had it on the tip of my tongue. Now you are satisfied, I hope. I must awaken our young man.'

"He approached me and pinched the tip of my little finger. I shook my head and rubbed my eyes, like one awakening from sleep, and asked very naturally what I was doing there.

"My companion looked at the people of the inn, who were greatly surprised at all they had seen and heard, and regarded me as an extraordinary being.

"'Now let us go back to bed,' said the cunning hunchback, taking one of the lights. 'To-morrow, gentlemen, I promise you that you shall see something still more astonishing, if you will allow us to make our experiments in peace.'

"My companion took me by the arm, and we regained our room, leaving the innkeeper and his men mutually assuring each other that all they had seen was real.

"When we were shut into our room, my companion threw himself into my arms and embraced me with joy.

"'My friend, I am delighted with you,' he said to me; 'you played your part to perfection; you are a precious boy, and our fortune is made. To-night's adventure will be noised abroad.'

"We returned to our beds, highly satisfied with the way in which we had got ourselves out of a very difficult scrape. I went to sleep, thinking of the charming Clairette, of whom I hoped to see more in the future, and my companion calculating what he should make at his first séance in

a town where his reputation had become so well established.

"The little hunchback was not deceived in his conjecture that our night's adventure would draw many curious persons; the people of the inn rose early in the morning, in order that they might recount, without loss of time, all that they had seen and heard. The barbers, the bakers, the grocers, were the first to whom the news was imparted; but that sufficed to make known to the whole town the wonderful things we could do. In passing from mouth to mouth, a story grows so rapidly that sometimes it is hard to recognize its correct origin, and this was true of what had happened to ourselves. Each one is pleased to embellish anything singular or marvellous, to outdo his neighbor; it is thus that the streamlet becomes a raging torrent, that a child who recites a compliment without making a mistake is a prodigy, that a thimblerigger is a sorcerer, that he who loves nothing better than his country is an object of suspicion to him who loves nothing but his own interest, and that a comet foretells the end of the world.

"The servant, while buying her ounce of coffee, learned from the grocer's shopman that two wonderful men, who are gifted with the faculty of telling you all you have done, and all you are going to do, are stopping at the Tête-Noire Inn.

"'Mercy! I must tell that to my mistress,'

observes the maid on leaving the shop. 'She went the other evening to walk with her cousin, and she does not wish that her husband should know. I must tell her not to allow her secret to be disclosed by these sorcerers.'

"'What news?' asked the old bachelor of his hairdresser, while seating himself in his chair and putting on his shaving-napkin.

"'What news, Monsieur Sauvageon? Bless me! we have some very singular — very spicy —'

"'Well, what, my friend? Speak! speak!'

"'Two strangers — doctors — who arrived yesterday at the Tête-Noire, have already made some experiments.'

"'Is that true?'

"'It is an assured fact. I had it from Jérôme, one of the men at the inn, who was a witness of it, ocularly and auricularly.'

"'The devil!'

"'Last night the somnambulist commenced his nocturnal lectures.'

"'His nocturnal lectures at night! These somnambulists are, then, nyctalopic.'

"'Yes, monsieur; they are nycta — What is that word, Monsieur Sauvageon?'

"'Nyctalopic, my friend.'

"'They are assuredly nyctalopic. But what does that word mean?'

"'It signifies that they possess the ability to see more clearly at night.'

"'Ah, I understand — like cats; but, faith! these somnambulists can see more at night than the cats. But to return to the one at the Tête-Noire; he divined everything they had done; last night he dis — '

"'Oh, come, my boy; no more of it; you will keep me for two hours with your tales. Put a little heliotrope pomade on my hair.'

"Our old bachelor was shaved at last, and his barber left him to go and relate his story to another of his customers, taking care to change it or to add something to it. It is delightful to some people to have news to tell and comment upon."

But in regard to our story, Mr. Author, you are a tremendous gossip, and you appear to like to listen to all the cackle of a little town. Very surely Frere Jacques did not relate to Sans-Souci the conversation of the old bachelor with his hairdresser, nor that of the maid at the neighboring grocer's. Where should he have learned it?

All very true, reader; I confess myself guilty; I will endeavor not to put my word again into the adventures of our soldier, and, as a beginning, I will let him resume his story.

"No sooner had we risen, and rung the bell for our breakfast, than our host came into our room, holding in his hand a great sheet of paper which he offered to my companion.

"'Gentlemen,' he said to us, bowing to the ground, 'here is a list of persons who are desirous of consulting you this evening, and who have left their names with me.'

"'That's good. Have you taken the names, titles, ages and conditions of these persons?'

"'Everything is set down there, monsieur.'

"'Very well; leave us now, and send your servant Clairette; I have some orders to give her, regarding this evening's séance.'

"Our host bowed with the humility of a Chinaman to a passing mandarin, and left us, promising to send the young girl immediately.

"My companion unrolled the list; it was considerable, and promised us a number of proselytes. The little hunchback was reading it at the top of his voice, and making his conjectures upon it, when Clairette came in.

"The little servant appeared somewhat embarrassed. She kept her eyes down and her hands clasped over her apron. As for me, I blushed, and knew not what to say. Clairette's presence quite upset me. I was sincerely in love; I experienced for her a true passion, and I believed she returned it. I think if anybody had then said to me that I must marry the young servant or give her up forever, I should have led her to the altar; and that which I experienced I believe many young people have felt. One loves so well the first time. Oh, my dear Sans-Souci, I was then very young

and very inexperienced; but I have learned since then that what one gains in experience one loses in pleasure.

"My companion went to close the door of our room, for it was not necessary to allow anyone to hear our conversation with Clairette. He returned to us and began the conference with a great burst of laughter, which made me open my eyes with astonishment, while Clairette dropped the ends of her apron.

"'My dears, you are still a little simple,' he said to us at last,—'you, my dear Jacques, who are in love with a young girl who will not think of you after tomorrow; and you, my little Clairette, who believe in sorcerers and reckon on remaining young all your life. We are no more sorcerers than anybody else, my dear girl; but it is necessary that you should aid us in imposing on the foolish people who are fighting among themselves for the privilege of consulting us. You shall know everything that we wish to do; first, because it will give you the opportunity of laughing at a great many people, which is always pleasing; second, because we shall pay you generously —I in money, and the young man in love; and, lastly, because, if you refuse to serve us, you will deprive yourself of large profits, which do not often accrue to one in a little town.'

"This speech put everyone at his ease; Clairette, who saw that the little hunchback knew

everything, accepted with a smile a double louis slipped into her hand, wishing nothing better than to serve as our gossip. The preliminaries being settled, Maitre Graograicus took the list again, desired me to write the young girl's answers, that we might not be mistaken on any point, and began his interrogatories, which Clairette answered to the best of her ability.

"'Annette Susanne Estelle Guignard, aged thirty-six?'

"'That's false; she's at least forty-five. She is an old maid who wants to get married at any cost, and nobody will have her, first, because she drinks, and, second, because she chews tobacco.'

"'That'll do. Antoine Nicolas La Giraudière, aged forty-five, employed at the town hall.'

"'He's a big, good-natured man; they say he will never set the Thames on fire. Perhaps he is coming to see if you can give him a little wit.'

"'Impossible; everybody thinks he has enough wit.'

"'Wait a minute. His wife has already had four girls, and she is frantic at having no boys.'

"'That's it; that's what he wants to consult us about. Pass on. Romauld César Hercule de La Souche, marquis de Vieux-Buissons, aged sixty-nine years, ancient master of the hounds, ancient light cavalryman, ancient page, ancient— The deuce! he could very well dispense with putting "ancient" before all his titles; I daresay he is

not able to mount a horse and no longer rides to hounds. What can he want of me?'

"'He is going to buy a small estate in the neighborhood; he is quarrelling with his vassals; he pretends that they are serfs.'

"'That's good; I know enough about him. Angelique Prudhomme, wife of Jolicœur, aged thirty-two years, laundress to all the wealthy people of the neighborhood.'

"'Ah, she is a gossip, let me tell you, is Madame Jolicœur. She makes herself the talk of the town; she washes for the officers of the garrison, and goes to balls with them.'

"'She's pretty, then?'

"'Oh, middling; she has a pleasant face with irregular features, and a bold air, like a soldier. She has already caused more than a dozen fights; and lastly, at the village festival, she waltzed with a drum major, who quarrelled with a sapper on the subject of an appointment she had made with the latter to walk with him in the maze. This would have ended seriously had not M. Jolicœur arrived on the scene; but he is a jolly, good-natured fellow, and he reconciled the drum major and the sapper by swearing to the latter that his wife did not intend to break her word to him, and that it was mere forgetfulness on her part.'

"'That husband knows how to live. Go on. Aline Cunegonde Trouillard, forty-four years old; keeps a refreshment-room, with a very good trade.'

"'Bah! she's always having hysterics or headaches; she's always thinking herself ill, and passes her time in taking medicine instead of being behind her counter.'

"'She's a valuable woman to the apothecaries.'

"'Her husband wishes to pass for a clever chemist; he makes coffee from asparagus seeds, and sugar from roots. Oh, I am sure he will come to consult you.'

"I continued to note down Clairette's answers, and we had nearly reached the end of our list, when someone knocked at our door. I had to open it; it was our host, who came to tell us that the mayor wished to see us, and that he awaited us at his house. We could not refuse this invitation. My companion put on his best coat, and even lent me a pair of black silk breeches which came down to my heels, and which my little hunchback had bought second-hand from a great poet, who had them from an actor of the boulevards, who had taken them from an academician, who had left them at the house of a little dancer to whom he was paying court.

"We departed a little disquieted as to the consequences of our visit. However, my companion, who had plenty of wit, hoped to win well out of the business. We arrived at the mayor's, were shown into his office, where we saw a little dried-up man, whose eyes sparkled with intelligence and animation. At the first questions he put to

us, my companion perceived that he had to deal with a clever adversary. The mayor was learned; he was thoroughly versed in many of the abstract sciences, among others, medicine, chemistry, botany and astronomy. Before him my poor little hunchback lost all his twaddle and audacity. The mayor, seeing our embarrassment, wished to put an end to it.

"'I have no intention of preventing you from gaining a livelihood,' he said smilingly to us; 'far otherwise. You profess, someone has told me, magnetism, and to cure all maladies; that is a very strong claim. I sincerely desire the well-being of my constituents. I desire, above all, to cure them of their foolish prejudices, their ancient superstitions, to which men are too much inclined. Magic, sorcery, magnetism, somnambulism, should have many attractions for lovers of the marvellous. I know that it is vain to oppose the prejudices of mankind; there is only one way to cure them, and that is to allow them to make dupes of themselves. For this reason I like to see quacks come into this town. It is always a new lesson for the inhabitants, for the sorcerers never go on their way without having made dupes. I shall therefore permit you to magnetize my constituents.'

"The mayor paid us no compliments; however, my companion bowed low, and thanked him for his good-will.

"'You have, no doubt, some remedy which

you give away, according to custom. Let me see what it is.'

"The hunchback immediately handed him a box of pills. The mayor took one and threw it in a little jar, where it was dissolved. He examined our crumb of bread for a moment, and gave us back the box, smiling.

"'Go, gentlemen,' he said, 'and sell as many as you can; they are not dangerous.'

"This ended our visit, and we returned to our inn, rejoicing that we had not had to show our philters or our charms to the mayor.

"At length the hour fixed for our public séance arrived. My companion had given me all the necessary instructions, and had caused me to repeat my part many times. He donned his professional costume, the black robe which makes lank people look tall, and shortens those of a contrary build, and in which my little hunchback looked exactly like a magician or a sorcerer—who should never be built like ordinary men; a venerable beard and a wizard's high cap completed Maitre Graograicus' costume.

"As for me, he gave me a sort of red tunic, dotted with yellow stars, which he had made out of an old coverlet bought in the Temple in Paris, which tunic was supposed to have come to me from the Grand Mogul. He also wished me to adorn my head with a turban of his making; but when I found it did not become me very well,

and when I thought that Clairette would see me in my grand costume, I would not put on the turban, and my companion was obliged to allow me to wear my hair curled à la Charles XII, which did not accord quite so well with the tunic; but great geniuses do not allow themselves to be embarrassed by such trifles.

"The parlor of our apartments was prepared for the mysteries which were to be brought to pass before our audience. A tub of clear water, a circle of iron, a wand of the same material, armchairs for ourselves, chairs for our consulters, benches for the spectators, and only one argand lamp, which produced a very doubtful light,—this was the manner in which we arranged everything.

"As soon as my companion had notified our host that the public might enter, the crowd rushed into the room, some with confidence, others half afraid, most of them urged by curiosity; but at last we had many people, and that was the essential thing. When everybody had come in and had taken his or her place, when the first whisperings had subsided, and when everybody had stared long enough at us, Maitre Graograicus saluted those assembled with dignity, and, not having any small benches, he mounted a footstove, that he might be easily seen by all, and began the usual discourse.

"'Gentlemen, ladies, and young ladies (if there are any in this assemblage), you know, or you do

not know, that there is in nature a material principle, unknown until recently, which principle works on the nerves. If you know, I shall not teach you anything; if you do not know, I shall explain it to you. We will say, then, that there is a principle, and we shall start from there; by means of this principle, and following certain mechanical laws, there is a mutual influence between living bodies, the earth, and the celestial spheres; consequently it manifests itself in animals — pay strict attention, gentlemen — in animals and particularly in man, by properties analogous to that of the magnet. I have discovered the secret of exerting this animal magnetism upon diseases, and it is by this method that I profess to cure them all.

"'The magnetic quality can be communicated and propagated by other bodies. This subtile matter penetrates walls, doors, glasses and metals, without notably losing its strength; it can be accumulated, concentrated, and transported in water and in glasses, and reflected from mirrors; it even propagates, communicates, and augments itself; finally, its power is unlimited. I have not invented what I here tell you. I do but repeat to you that which the learned Mesmer, Deslon and others would still say to you if they were not dead.'

"The audience listened in the most profound silence, the young people opening their eyes wide, the young girls smiling, the old men shaking

their heads, the women looking at each other, and nobody daring to say to his neighbor that he understood nothing of the explanation given by this new worker of wonders. The latter perceived this and continued: —

"'I see, gentlemen and ladies, that I have convinced you, and will not pursue this reasoning further; I should, however, add, before commencing my experiments, that there are some bodies that are not susceptible to animal magnetism, and which even have a property distinctly opposed to it, by which they can destroy its efficiency in other bodies. I flatter myself that we shall not here encounter any of these unfortunate bodies, but I have given you warning in case it should happen. Raise your minds, if you possibly can, to the height of the sublime discovery which occupies us. There is nothing here of quackery; it is the evidence, it is the power, it is the secret influence, which works; it is —'

"At this point in his discourse the footstove broke, and the orator rolled into the middle of the room; however, he picked himself up immediately, and addressed himself to the assemblage with new ardor.

"'Gentlemen,' cried he, 'I wished to finish with an experiment. While speaking to you a moment ago, I magnetized that footstove with my left foot, and I was sure of reducing it to powder. You see what I have accomplished.'

"Unanimous applause came from all parts of the room.

"'You see,' said my companion to me, in an undertone, 'I am never disconcerted; the man of wit turns everything to account.'

"The experimental moment approached, and, as effrontery communicates itself still more easily than magnetism, I awaited with impatience, in my easy-chair, the opportunity of also showing my self-possession.

"Madame Jolicœur came first, in spite of all the Marquis de Vieux-Buissons could say, the latter maintaining that a man of his quality should come before everybody else. But the laundress was not a woman to yield to anybody; besides, she was pretty and young; the marquis was old, ugly and wrinkled; to Madame Jolicœur rightly belonged the precedence.

"The great magnetizer took her by the hand and made her turn around the tub; then he bade her seat herself, and magnetized her with the end of his wand. The young woman did not appear disposed to go to sleep.

"'I will put you en rapport with my somnambulist,' he said to her. The laundress looked at me smilingly, and did not appear vexed at the proposition.

"I knew my part; I had taken my notes on Madame Jolicœur.

"'We must strike a decisive blow,' said my

companion to me in a low tone; 'for this woman would be capable of making a laughing-stock of us.'

"The laundress was placed in front of me. He told her to keep silent, and to allow herself to be touched; she did this very cheerfully. However, she laughed mischievously when I took one of her hands, and, while feigning to be asleep, I heard her murmur softly, —

"'Ah, mercy! this is stupid. The sapper told me truly that they would tease me with their tricks.'

"I told immediately in a high voice all that Clairette had divulged to us of the laundress' love affairs. I forgot nothing, — neither the drum major, nor the waltz, nor the rendezvous, nor what followed. At the first word the assemblage commenced to laugh, and Madame Jolicœur was disturbed. Before I had finished my speech she had risen, and, warding off the curious crowd with blows from her elbow, left the inn, swearing that we were sorcerers.

"This first experiment left no doubt as to the virtue of magnetism; and the Marquis de Vieux-Buissons gravely advanced towards us and begged my colleague in an almost polite tone to immediately put him en rapport with me.

"The usual preliminaries being ended, the ensuing dialogue took place between us: —

"'Who am I?'

"'Very high and very powerful lord in your old château, of which only one wing remains standing; this is why you wish to buy a small new estate in the neighborhood.'

"'That's right; but at this moment what do I wish to do?'

"'You wish that your vassals should act before you as a lamb before a lion,—submissive, trembling and frightened; you wish to be master of their destinies; you wish them to give you the best and finest of all they have gained by the sweat of their brow, and you wish that they should pay for it too.'

"'That is quite right.'

"'Finally, you wish to revive all the ancient rights of your seignory as they existed in the good old days of chivalry, when one walked lance before him; fighting when, in a narrow road where people could not pass two abreast, one would not yield the way to the other; fighting when those whom one met would not say that one's fair lady was the fairest of all the ladies, even when he had not seen her; fighting against the dwarfs, or against the giants, who carried off young girls, and who, despite their enormous clubs,—for a giant never walked anywhere without one of these,—allowed themselves to be pierced like manikins by the first cavalier who came along.'

"'That is true; that's all very true. I should like to have a dwarf stationed at the door of my

dovecote, to kill every giant who came on my land, or anybody else that he saw.'

"'Oh, as to that, marquis, take Maitre Graograicus' pills, — take many and often, — and you will be rejuvenated; young and gallant, your white hair will become black, your height will be restored, your wrinkles will be effaced, your cheeks filled out, your color and your teeth restored; and I tell you that when this great change has been wrought in you, your vassals will do everything you wish; and, above all, the pretty girls will not fly at your approach.'

"The marquis, delighted by my answers, took a dozen boxes of pills, for which he paid without bargaining. He put them all in his pockets, swallowed half a dozen pills then and there, and went home holding his head high, his eyes reanimated, imagining himself already ten years younger.

"After the pompous marquis, Aline Cunegonde Trouillard came forward. Neither preliminaries nor discourse were necessary to induce her to believe in magnetism; the poor woman's nerves were in so sensitive a condition that she fainted as soon as my companion had touched her with the end of his wand. In my interview with her I said to her all that came into my head; she had all the diseases I named; she felt all the pains I described, and had experienced all the symptoms I mentioned. Weak minds are notoriously a source of profit for quacks. Madame Trouillard

filled her reticule with pills and departed, having taken a subscription to all our séances, public and private.

"We were waiting for Estelle Guignard, who had inscribed her name, when a big peasant in wooden shoes and a blue blouse pushed his way through the crowd and approached us. I had no answers prepared for this newcomer; however, he left me alone, and addressed himself to my confrère, who was seeking Clairette's eyes in the hope of obtaining from her some indispensable information; but the young girl, who had not supposed that we should have need of her, had gone back to the kitchen. It was necessary, therefore, to act without our gossip. My colleague hoped to extricate himself easily from his difficulty, seeing he had only to deal with a peasant; he drew near the villager, who looked with wonderment at the mysterious tub, and, trying to assume a still more important bearing, he commenced to question him.

"'Who are you?'

"'Indeed, you know that well enough, if you are a sorcerer.'

"'Of course I know; but when I ask you the question it is because I have reasons known to myself for doing so. Answer without tergiversation.'

"'Without tergiv—without tergiv—What did you say?'

"'I asked you your name.'

"'I am called the same as my brother, — Eustache Nicole.'

"'What is your occupation?'

"'Goodness! I work in the fields, or I draw the boss' carts when there is merchandise to deliver.'

"'Why did you come here?'

"'Why, I came for the same reason as other people, — to see what a magician is like.'

"'Who told you about me?'

"'The barber, when he shaved me this morning, and, as there have not been any sorcerers in this part of the country for a long time, I came post-haste to see you.'

"'Do you wish to be magnetized?'

"'Magne — How do you say that?'

"'Do you wish that I should set in motion this secret agent?'

"'Put in motion anything you please.'

"'Well, what do you wish to know?'

"'Oh, anything you please; can't you divine what I want?'

"'To do that, I should first have to magnetize you.'

"'Come, I should like that; will it cost me much?'

"'I make no charge for it.'

"'Ah, I see that you are a sorcerer, since you can do your business without anyone's first greasing your hand.'

"My little hunchback seated the peasant in an easy-chair; then he touched him several times with his magic wand; but the rustic was impervious to the charms. My companion then lightly made passes with his fingers before the subject's eyes, in order to convey to him the magnetic fluid. The villager allowed him to do all he wished, and contented himself with turning from time to time in his easy-chair and rubbing his eyes. I felt a great inclination to laugh on seeing the trouble he gave my poor comrade, who was dripping with perspiration from his efforts to magnetize Eustache Nicole.

"At last the peasant became quieter; he ceased to move his chair or to rub his eyes.

"'The charm is working,' said Maitre Graograicus in a low voice, continuing his exercise. 'This scamp has given me a great deal of trouble, but at last I have come to an end. You see he is now in a state of somnambulism; in a little while he will speak.'

"But, instead of speaking, the villager, who was really asleep, suddenly emitted so loud a snore that the magician jumped back in affright. I burst into a fit of laughter, which was echoed by the whole assemblage.

"The sudden noise reawakened our villager, who got up, asking if the experiment was finished.

"'You are a big booby,' said my companion to him, angrily; 'you have spoilt everything

with your snoring; you are unworthy of being magnetized.'

"The villager would not endure this; he became angry and said it was we who were deceiving the poor people, and that we were no more sorcerers than he was. At these words Maitre Graograicus, wishing to put out this insolent fellow, who doubted his knowledge, pushed him with his wand. The peasant, irritated, turned, and seized the magnetizer by the beard; the latter cried out. The curious crowd pressed around them; the women called for help, the wiser ones contented themselves with laughing, and the advocates of magnetism hastened to the help of the poor sorcerer, who was struggling with Monsieur Nicole, who would not let go of his beard. While struggling, the gentlemen approached the tub; they slipped, and fell into it. The water refreshed and calmed their senses. The peasant, withdrawing his head from the tub, let go of his adversary's beard and quietly left the room. My companion, who was very wet, felt that he was no longer in a condition to make proselytes, and declared that the séance was ended.

CHAPTER VIII

The Effect of the Philters. Frere Jacques Leaves His Companion. End of His Adventures

"In spite of the extremely disagreeable ending of our first magnetic séance, our business prospered at the Tête-Noire Inn. Clairette made herself of the greatest use to us and gave us all the information we could possibly desire. To prevent a second enactment of the scene occasioned by Eustache Nicole, we allowed no one to come near us but those persons who had paid in advance for the privilege.

"But the curiosity of the townspeople soon wore itself out, and the effect of our pills did not invariably answer to the requirements of the purchasers. For my part, I had already begun to tire of my first sweetheart; I was no longer in love with Clairette, and I was therefore quite ready to take my departure from the place when my companion proposed it to me.

"For six months we lived in the same manner, staying for a long or short period of time in one neighborhood, according to our success in making dupes. There were always plenty of these; but

we did not always find confederates, and we were then liable to make gross errors. For instance, I said one day to a usurer that he did not love money; to a drunkard, that he did not love wine; to a gambler, that he did not care for cards; and to a bachelor, that his wife was unfaithful to him. You may conceive, Sans-Souci, that we did not shine in that village.

"But the life was growing tedious to me, and I had already made my companion understand that I wished to sever my connection with him; but he always contrived to retain me. My faith! I resolved one day to give full scope to my prankishness and play him some tricks that would dissipate his inclination to continue our association.

"We were in a little town where we were doing marvellously well. Magnetism and somnambulism had turned everyone's head. People fought among themselves to consult us and to obtain meetings; I could not accede to all the demands for pills, and even the charms were retailing very well. It was that which decided me to make an experiment of my own on the idiots who applied to us.

"An old lawyer had been courting for some time a middle-aged coquette, who refused to respond to his passion, without, however, ceasing to listen to his ardent declaration of love. The lady was crafty; she liked to see him at her feet, and feared to accept her lover lest she should lose the

influence which she exercised over him. Both of them came to consult us; the lawyer, to find a way to win his belle, and the lady, to find a way of preserving the charms that had made him so unhappy. My companion promised to M. Gérard — which was the name of the old suitor — a philter which would make the coldest woman loving, and to Madame Dubelair, a charm to preserve herself from the ravages of time.

"In the same house as Madame Dubelair, the deputy mayor of the place had his lodging. M. Rose was a good man, but his wife found one great defect in him: he was not sufficiently in love with her, and he was not at all jealous. Madame Rose came also to consult us as to the means she should employ to repair her husband's indifference. To make a husband who has been married for fifteen years ardently in love with his wife is a sufficiently difficult task. Nevertheless, my companion promised to Madame Rose a philter which was marvellous in its effect of producing jealousy, and the dear woman took herself off, delighted to think that she could still plague her husband.

"My hunchback hastened to concoct his philters, and bade me carry each to its address, admonishing me to be sure and collect the bills. It occurred to me on the way that it would be great fun to change the destination of the little phials. 'The deuce!' I said to myself; 'I should like to

see what comes of it. Let us give the love philter to Madame Rose, in place of the one which provokes jealousy; to M. Gérard, the one which causes anger; and to Madame Dubelair, the one which provokes to jealousy. This exchange cannot fail to be comical in its results.' No sooner said than done. I carried the three philters to the three persons, assured them of their magical effects, and departed, to await with impatience the fruits of my waggishness.

"M. Gérard had solicited the honor of lunching tête-à-tête with Madame Dubelair, who had graciously accorded her permission. I had carried him his love charm early in the morning, and, that he might not lack courage or ardor, he considered that he should do well in taking his potion before going to see his sweetheart. Madame Dubelair herself had hastened to swallow the contents of the miraculous phial whose contents should render her charms impregnable to the assaults of time; and Madame Rose had turned a part of the contents of her bottle into her husband's morning chocolate.

"You know, my dear Sans-Souci, what drugs my hunchback used and how he combined them, calculating so as to produce an infallible effect; imagine the events which transpired on this memorable evening. M. Gérard went to the house of his beloved; while on the way he felt some symptoms of uneasiness, and his head was reeling; he

thought that the charm was working, and he hastened to Madame Dubelair's; he found her lying carelessly upon a sofa. But, much to his surprise, his fair friend was scarcely recognizable; her nose was red and swollen, her skin drawn, and her forehead was covered with pimples.

"'How do you think I am looking this evening, Monsieur Gérard?' asked Madame Dubelair, smiling mischievously. 'I am sure you will think me changed.'

"'In fact, madame,' answered the poor lawyer, putting his hand to his digestive apparatus, and making diabolical grimaces, 'I find you greatly changed; you are undoubtedly ill.'

"'Ill! ill! And you yourself, monsieur, are making extraordinary contortions.'

"'Madame, I confess that — for a moment.'

"'Fifine, my hand mirror; I wish to know if I am looking as ill as monsieur thinks.'

"Poor Gérard was in agonies; the philter was working, and headache and colic ensued; the lady's maid brought Madame Dubelair her mirror. The coquette looked at herself; she cried out affrightedly, broke the mirror and went into hysteries. Her poor lover besought Fifine to show him to a bedroom; but the young girl, mischievous and prankish, like most of her class, laughed loudly at his distress; and, to heighten the disorder, Madame Rose ran crying that she was betrayed, dishonored, that her husband was a monster, and

that he was making love to the portress. Our love philter had put a demon into poor M. Rose; the poor man had returned home hoping to find his wife; however, she had hidden herself in order to make him jealous, and the dear husband had bestowed upon the portress, a woman of fifty, the caresses intended for his wife.

"The cries of Madame Rose, who was furious, and of the portress, who pretended to be so; of Madame Dubelair, who wished to tear off her nose; the groans of M. Gérard, who was in great pain; and the weeping of M. Rose, who deplored his perversity, presently attracted the neighbors. They came running; they pushed and pressed; they gave Madame Rose orange-flower water; the portress, eau-de-cologne; Madame Dubelair, ether; M. Gérard, a cordial; and M. Rose, extract of pondlily.

"When the clamor was somewhat quieted they tried to learn the cause of all these misfortunes. It must be that under it all there was something uncanny. Madame Dubelair assured them that she had never had a pimple on her nose or anywhere else; M. Gérard, that he never suffered from indigestion; and Madame Rose avowed, despite her anger, that her husband was not a man who was in the habit of kissing women, especially those who had gray hair. Apparently these extraordinary events had a secret origin. They recalled the philters, they made mutual confidences,

and came to the conclusion that the little hunchback was a sorcerer, a magician, a quack, an impostor worthy to be consigned to the place of eternal punishment; but, while waiting for him to go there, they decided to put him in prison, which would at least prevent him from resuming his infamous sorceries. Deputy Rose went to the mayor, to whom he explained the case, and obtained full authority to arrest the culprit. On his side, the old lawyer assembled all the prominent personages of the neighborhood; they shared his anger, and thought no punishment too bad for a mountebank who had given a colic to a man of the robe. Madame Dubelair and Madame Rose roused the ire of all the women. Madame Dubelair, in particular, left not a word unsaid; a man who could make one's nose red and one's color leaden was a scoundrel who deserved hanging. As to the philter that M. Rose had taken, all the ladies desired some of it for their special use, thinking that by thus dividing it, it would not produce more than an agreeable effect.

"These events having taken time, it was daybreak when they directed their steps towards our dwelling to arrest us. I say us, because I think that I should have shared my companion's fate. But since evening I had been on foot. I had run about the village, I had witnessed all their proceedings, I had heard the proposals of each one; briefly, I knew they were coming to arrest us, and

I did not esteem it prudent to await the event. While my companion was sleeping, I made a little package of my effects and of the money I had earned while with him, being careful to take only what belonged to me; at length, with many wishes for my little hunchback's good fortune, I departed from our dwelling, leaving him to get out of the scrape as best he could.

"I do not know what happened to him, for I never saw him again; but as they do not hang sorcerers, since they have discovered that there are not any, I am very sure my poor quack was purged of his offence by a few months in prison.

"I had about thirty louis in my purse, for selling pills made of bread crumbs is lucrative; one makes few of them in advance, and allows no credit, which insures one against losses. You may well imagine, my dear Sans-Souci, that I did not forget to divert myself in the several towns where I stopped; but at Brussels I had an adventure which put an end to my pleasuring.

"I had been lodging for two days at the inn, passing my time like all idlers and strangers, — eating a good deal, drinking the same, walking with no particular destination, and visiting everything that appeared to me the least enteresting.

"On the second day I went to the theatre, where I found myself beside a young man of honest exterior, who appeared to be three or four years older than myself, and already possessed of

much knowledge of the world. We chatted together; he at once informed me that he was from Lyons, that he was travelling for his pleasure and to protect himself from a marriage which his parents wished to force upon him. His confidence provoked mine, and I told him about my journey and all my adventures, the recital of which appeared to interest him greatly.

"Briefly, after this, the conformity of our tastes and humor caused us to become friends. Breville —for that was the name of my new acquaintance —invited me to dine with him the next day, at one of the best restaurateurs', and I accepted with a good heart; for it is extremely pleasurable, when alone in a strange city, to find someone with whom one can be on terms of intimacy.

"My new friend treated me to the best. We made an excellent repast, after which came a walk, the theatre and the cafés. For a stranger, Breville appeared to know a good deal of the city; he took me to all the smoking-rooms and public places; and I complimented him laughingly on his facility of remembrance as to the way to all the pleasure resorts. Finally, after tasting liberally of the various forms of dissipation common to a great city, we found ourselves on the street at one o'clock in the morning, intoxicated with punch, liqueurs and beer.

"I could hardly hold myself up, and heartily wished myself in bed, if only I could have been

transported thither by some good genie; for I felt that my legs were hardly in a condition to serve me. Breville appeared less overcome than myself; however, he complained of fatigue also. The street lamps afforded a very imperfect light, and for an hour I begged my companion to put me on my way home; but we penetrated all the streets and alleys in vain; I could not find my inn.

"My guide confessed at last that he had mistaken the way, and that we were far from my dwelling; but, on the other hand, we were near his, where he offered me a bed. You may imagine that I accepted this offer without hesitation. I was no longer in a condition for walking, even if I could have seen my way clearly, an inevitable result of the many pleasures we had tasted. Breville knocked at the door of a dark passage. An old woman opened to us. I went up, or, rather, he compelled me to ascend, a dirty winding staircase, and enter a nearly empty room, which at any other time would not have given me a very flattering idea of the circumstances of my new acquaintance. Just then, however, I could think of nothing but getting to sleep. In two minutes I was stretched on a wretched pallet, where I soon sank into the most profound slumber.

"I felt myself violently shaken during the night, but such was the effect of the punch and strong liqueurs I had taken that I did not awaken,

and it was not until late the next morning that successive shakings made me open my eyes.

"'Halloo, friend! wake up. You have slept long enough,—the very thing to make you ill.'

"These were the first words which fell upon my ears. I opened my eyes wide; I looked all around me and made no answer, for the scene which met my sight left me uncertain if I were really awake.

"Judge of my surprise, my dear Sans-Souci; in place of finding myself in a room and on the bed where I had gone to sleep the night before, I found myself extended on a stone bench in a kind of square, without coat or hat, having no clothing but my shirt, trousers and vest, and surrounded by some street messengers, who were looking at me with curiosity.

"'Come, comrade,' said one of them to me, 'wake yourself up. You probably supped well last night, and finally got very drunk. The deuce! I tell you that knocks one out prettily. I know what that is; one feels pretty stupid the next morning; one's memory is all gone; but that'll all come back by degrees.'

"The words of this man recalled to me all the folly of the evening before. Quick as thought I examined my pockets. Alas, they were empty! Like most young men, I had been foolish enough to carry on my person everything I possessed. I had been the dupe of a scoundrel. I inquired

vainly of those about me for the dwelling of Breville; nobody knew him. I looked about to see if I could recognize the house to which the traitor had taken me, but could see nothing that resembled it. I rose with shame and rage in my heart. Had I then seen the thief who had cheated me, I know not to what excess my fury would have carried me; but you may well imagine that he kept out of my sight. I asked the way to my inn, and sadly turned my steps there. But what should I do? what turn to? I had not a sou, and I was dressed like a mendicant. After having played the fine gentleman, after having satisfied all one's desires, to find one's self reduced to beggary,—what a frightful change! How I regretted then my little hunchback and our magnetic séances.

"If I could only have resumed the craft alone, I should have been content; but I had not even the wherewithal to buy the material to make the pills, and I felt sure that a somnambulist without shoes or stockings could put nobody to sleep.

"I had, however, decided to die rather than beg for a living; and, thinking thus, I returned to the inn, from which I had set out in such different circumstances the evening before. I entered the room where the guests were breakfasting; nobody recognized me, and the waiters were about to turn me out when I sadly told them of my adventure.

"The host expressed his sympathy, but he did

not invite me to return to my room, where I had left some small belongings which would at least suffice to pay my expenses. I remained standing in the midst of the travellers. I said nothing; but the tears poured from my eyes, and my silence was more eloquent than speech.

"'Well, young man, what are you going to do now?' said a voice which at this painful moment went to my heart. I turned my head and perceived two soldiers breakfasting at a table near by.

"'Alas, monsieur!' I said to one of them, who was looking sympathetically at me, 'I don't know what to do; I am entirely without resources.'

"'Without resources! One is never without them so long as he is brave and has done nothing dishonest. Come, try again. Have some breakfast with us, and take courage. The deuce! at your age no one need despair.'

"These words put me in better spirits. I did not allow them to repeat their invitation, and I ate a good portion of a rasher of ham and a piece of cheese, which composed the breakfast of the two soldiers. When I had satisfied my hunger a little, the one who appeared to be the superior again addressed me.

"'My dear boy, you have run away from your parents to commit follies — fault one; you have allied yourself with doubtful characters — fault two; you have allowed yourself to be robbed — fault three. Up to the present time your conduct

is excusable; but take care; after being a dupe one sometimes becomes a thief. This happens only too often to heedless young men, who, like you, find themselves without money the day after a feast. They give way then to their taste for debauchery and idleness; they commit base deeds to obtain the means of subsistence, and become guilty where at first they were only heedless. You are on the road, young man, and it is necessary for you to call a halt. You will not earn a dinner by sitting with your hands folded, nor a pair of breeches by star-gazing. Have you a trade?'

"'No, monsieur.'

"'In that case, why not become a soldier, take a musket and bear it honorably? You are young, big, well-built; see to it that you are also brave, submissive to your superiors, and I'll answer for it that you will make your way.'

"Overjoyed by the proposal, I jumped from my chair to embrace my protector, and overturned the table, on which, fortunately, there was nothing left. My impetuosity pleased the sergeant and his comrade; he led me immediately to their captain, who, after weighing me with a look, received me into his company, where, since, I am not afraid to say, I have always done my duty honorably.

"You now know all my adventures, my dear Sans-Souci. I needn't speak of those which occurred to me in the regiment; you shared them with me, and they are common to all soldiers.

Love adventures, fights, quarrels, reconciliations, carousals, fastings, victories, reverses, — these are the things which make up the history of a soldier.

"The years rolled by; I did not forget my family; but I will confess that I did not wish to appear before them until I had attained an honorable rank. I had hope of this. I had already received this decoration when events changed the face of things. On returning to civil life, I thought that an honest and brave soldier could not cause his parents to blush, and I went to Paris to look for them, and learned that they were dead. That was a cruel blow; but my brother's frigid reception, his cold tone, his suspicions, lacerated my feelings. That is done with, Sans-Souci; he shall not see me again, — the wretch! He shall never more hear of me."

Thus Jacques ended the tale of his adventures, and a tear moistened his eyelid as he drew to a close. The tear was for his brother, whom he still loved, in spite of the manner in which he had received him.

It was almost night. Jacques' story had taken him longer than he had at first thought it would, and Sans-Souci had listened with so much interest that he had not realized that the dinner hour had long since passed. But when his comrade had finished, he rose, shook his head, and slapped his chest, as he looked at his companion.

"Comrade, you have told me all?"

"Yes."

"All right. Forward!"

"What are you going to do? Where do you wish to go?"

"No matter where, so long as it is a place where one can get something to eat."

"Ah, you are hungry?"

"Yes, thousand cartridges! — and terribly hungry. My stomach can't be nourished with adventures. Yours were very amusing, but since you've done talking I've felt as if I needed something more solid."

"Do you wish me to begin again?"

"No, indeed; I wish you to follow me."

"But where are we now?"

"Come along. Forward!"

Jacques and his comrade started to walk across country; they could not see clearly, and did not know which road to take. Jacques uttered not a word. Sans-Souci sang and swore alternately, often fuming against the hedges and bushes which barred their way. At length, after walking for an hour, they saw a light.

"Forward towards the light!" said Sans-Souci, doubling his pace; "now we shall get some supper."

"Sans-Souci, have you any money?"

"Not a sou. And you?"

"No more than yourself."

"Never mind; we'll keep moving.'

They approached the building whence came the light; it appeared to be large enough for a farm-house, but it was too dark clearly to distinguish objects. Sans-Souci advanced gropingly, and began to beat with all his force of feet and fists against the first door he came to. In vain Jacques begged him to make less noise; Sans-Souci was dying with hunger, and he listened to nothing but his stomach, which clamored loudly to him. At last the disturbance he made aroused two dogs that were at large in the yard, and their barking awoke the cows, which began to low, and the asses, which commenced to bray. In the midst of this hideous concert, the voice of a woman who had come to a window called loudly, —

"Who is there? What do you want? Why don't you answer?"

"Why, thousand guns! if I am not mistaken it is she; it is my brunette. What did I say to you, Jacques? We shall have some supper; we are at the farm. — Open, my dear; open quickly. Love and hunger draw me towards you."

"Why, it must be him!"

"Yes, it is him — it is me — it is us at last. Come, Louise; dress quickly and open the door to us. But try to silence those beasts, for nobody can hear himself for their noise."

The farmer's wife left the window to come and open the door; and Sans-Souci told Jacques then

that they were at the house of the woman of whose infidelity he had informed him in the morning, that at bottom she was a very good woman, very sensitive, very obliging, and always willing to be of use.

"But her husband," said Jacques, — "he is the master of the house, eh?"

"No; primo, Louise is the mistress; secundo, he's a very good fellow. Oh, she told me everything this morning; she wished me then to stay at the farm, and pass myself off for one of her distant relations returning from the army. I did not accept because I had promised to rejoin you, and your friendship had first claim on me. But, since you are here, and we are our own masters — My faith! it's a good wind that blows us towards my beauty. Silence! here she is."

At this moment Louise opened the door; she appeared surprised to see Jacques.

"This is my friend," said Sans-Souci; "he is a brave fellow, a good comrade, whom I will never leave."

"Oh, well, that is all right; he is our friend also. See there; my husband's asleep, but it's all the same, Sans-Souci; remember that you are our cousin."

"Well, that's all settled; let's walk into the kitchen."

"I will cook you an omelet and some bacon."

"That'll be delicious. But are you alone?"

"Our man is to be married the day after tomorrow, and at present does nothing but sleep."

"Is that so? Give me the handle of the stove."

Presently supper was ready, and Jacques and Sans-Souci did it much honor. Louise watched them laughing, and thinking how surprised her husband would be in the morning to find two strangers had slept at his house.

"I shall have to put you in the little room with the cheeses," said the farmer's wife; "it is the next to this, and you could not pass through ours without waking my husband. Tomorrow we will make better arrangements."

Louise laid much stress on this fact, — that no one must awaken her husband, — and led the newcomers into a small room where the cheeses which had been made for the winter were placed on long shelves against the wall. The odor diffused in this chamber was anything but balmy, but tired soldiers are not hard to please. Jacques threw himself on his bed and slept peacefully; Sans-Souci, on the plea that the cheeses discommoded him, went out to seek the fresh air; the night passed well, and the farmer did not awaken at an inopportune moment.

The next day everyone was stirring very early. Farmer Guillot's eyes were wide with astonishment at his wife's story, who said that one of them was her cousin, an old soldier, who had come in the night with one of his comrades. Guillot kissed

the cousin and his friend; he feasted them, drank with them, found them very jolly fellows, and carried them to see his farm, his poultry, his oxen, his wheat and his hay. Our two soldiers found all this very fine and perfectly kept up; they complimented the farmer, and were very soon the best friends in the world.

Jacques loved the country, the meadows, the woods and the work of the fields; Sans-Souci loved the farmer's wife and her cooking. In the evening Jacques recounted to Guillot his battles, his sieges, his adventures; the farmer opened his eyes wide and held his breath; Sans-Souci himself listened, and shared the villagers' pleasure, which he prolonged by adding to the recital whenever it concerned himself. These adventures were very entertaining to the peasants, who went gayly to their work in the fields in the morning when the soldiers promised them a story in the evening.

The villagers asked, as a favor, permission to come and listen to Louise's cousin and his comrade; and as in the country there is neither awkwardness nor ceremony, the big lower room of the farm was filled with peasants as soon as work was finished. The old woman carried her spinning-wheel, the housekeeper her needlework, the young girl her sheaves; in a corner a young peasant shook his horse's food in a winnowing-basket; farther off an old man was drinking; while a laborer, seated upon a cask, was smoking. The

children romped on the floor or played with Sans-Souci's mustache, Louise prepared the soup, Guillot sorted some grains; and all turned their eyes on Jacques, listening with attention to the history of a battle. When the story approached a climax and Jacques became animated, their faces expressed anxiety, fear, terror. The old woman stopped her wheel, the laborer took his pipe from his mouth, the old man forgot his glass, the boy ceased to agitate his winnowing-basket, and each one, with stretched neck and open mouth, awaited the issue of the battle before resuming his occupation.

Thus a week rolled rapidly by. However, our two companions, who did not wish to repay the hospitality of the farmer with stories, employed their mornings in helping the villagers in their work; Jacques followed Guillot to the fields; he worked, he dug with might and main. At first the farmer opposed his working, but Jacques insisted, and in a short time became very useful. As for Sans-Souci, he stayed with Louise, who furnished him constant occupation; he followed her to the garret, the cellar, the garden, the kitchen, and everywhere she found something for him to do.

A little later the farmer's man married, and went away to live with his wife. It was necessary that Guillot should engage someone to replace him; the farm was large, the land pertaining to it

considerable, and the farmer felt that he should like Jacques and Sans-Souci to aid him in working it. He dared not himself propose this to the two friends, but Louise, who wished also to keep them, said that she would manage the matter.

At the first words Jacques kissed the farmer's wife for joy.

"I feared," said he, "to be a charge on you; and you offer me the means of earning an honest living; I accept with thanks. I will be a laborer. I can answer that Sans-Souci will remain with me. We have both been soldiers, but, whether carrying a gun or guiding a plough, one can still serve his country."

CHAPTER IX

Four Months of Marriage. New Projects

Edouard, the sweet Adeline, and kind Mamma Germeuil were at last located in the pretty house at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges. Edouard, who had not spoken to them of his meeting with his brother, trembled as he approached the village, and became still more agitated as he entered his parents' former dwelling, for he expected at every moment to meet Frere Jacques, and on the day of his arrival he absolutely refused to walk in the gardens. However, he had decided to accord his brother a warm welcome, and to present him to his wife's family; but even while he was taking this resolution, he experienced an embarrassment, a vague fear, and a secret dissatisfaction, for he feared the result of his disclosure of Frere Jacques' identity.

The second day after his arrival in the country he contrived to secretly question the person who had been in charge of the house.

"Has anyone called during my absence? Have you seen that stranger, — that man with the mustaches, who was always at the end of the garden?"

"No, monsieur, no; I've seen no more of him."

Edouard breathed more freely, and became more cheerful when near the ladies. Time rolled on and no one saw the mustached face. Madame Germeuil sometimes laughingly remarked upon it, knowing nothing of the uneasiness she caused her son-in-law; but at last everyone forgot this little episode, and Edouard recovered his tranquillity.

Adeline's love did not change; still tender, sensitive, she idolized her husband; she was happy only when he was near her, and when she could read in his looks the same feelings, the same love, the same happiness. She carried in her bosom the pledge of Edouard's love; and this was a new subject of joy, of hope, of plans for the future. Thus dreaming of the happiness that awaited her as a mother, Adeline became less heedless, less lively; her coming responsibilities made her pensive. There was little social life in the country, but Edouard was still in love with his wife, and experienced no weariness. Sometimes, however, he found the evenings long, and Mamma Germeuil's piquet everlasting. The walks about the neighborhood also had become a trifle monotonous. But Adeline's endearments were still desirable and her kisses still sweet.

One fine day a carriage stopped before Murville's house; two ladies and a gentleman alighted, and entered the court. The porter asked the names of the strangers, that he might announce them to his ladies, who were in the garden. But

they wished to surprise the Murville family, and one of the two ladies, who appeared to be the leader of the party, made her way at once toward the garden and invited her friends to follow her.

On perceiving company at last, Madame Germeuil and Adeline rose with surprise and advanced toward Madame Dolban.

"Why, is it you, my dear? Nothing could be more delightful."

"I wished to surprise you. I have promised myself this pleasure for a long time past, for I am passionately fond of the country. I have brought my little cousin Jenny, who anticipated much pleasure in accompanying me; and, as it was necessary we should have an escort, I have taken the liberty of bringing to you also M. Dufresne, who is delighted to have the opportunity of making your acquaintance."

M. Dufresne bowed with much empressement to the ladies, and Madame Germeuil assured Madame Dolban that her friends were very welcome.

"But monsieur should not be unknown to you," replied Madame Dolban; "he was at dear Adeline's wedding. Madame Devaux presented him to you, I think."

"I believe that I do recall the circumstance," answered Madame Germeuil; "but on such occasions one is so much occupied that it is excusable if one does not notice all the young men present. You are aware also of the peculiar events

which transpired on that occasion. Poor Madame de Volenville and M. Robineau!"

"Ah, don't mention that, my dear, or you will make me die of laughing. But where is Murville?"

"Oh, he is looking about the neighborhood; he will be back soon. Come into the house and rest yourselves."

They went into the drawing-room. Dufresne offered his arm to Madame Germeuil, and Adeline conducted Madame Dolban and her cousin. Very soon Edouard came in, appearing agreeably surprised to find visitors at the house.

However much one loves, the most delightful tête-à-tête becomes wearisome at length. A coquette understands how to manage, and she sometimes repulses, in order to render desire still more lively. But Adeline was not a coquette. — Let us return to our company.

Madame Dolban was still a young woman. She was not pretty, but her features were expressive, and she had what in society is called presence, and a facility for making small talk.

The little Jenny was a young girl of eighteen years, very simple, very sweet, who knew how to remain silent while her cousin was talking. As to Dufresne, we know him already,— imperfectly, it is true, but later on we shall be able to estimate him better.

It was at Adeline's wedding that he had become

acquainted with Madame Dolban. Had he become enamoured of her? That appears hardly probable; however, he had conducted himself as though he were very much in love, courting the widow assiduously, and she had been an easy victim. Madame Dolban was not a virtuous woman, but she artfully concealed her frailties, and thus retained the privilege of being received in a society which had due regard for morals and decency; and Madame Germeuil was among the select few who composed this society. Dufresne had acquired absolute control of Madame Dolban's mind. She loved him passionately, and would have sacrificed everything for him. It had not taken her long to discern that the young man who called himself a business man, agent, stockbroker, or merchant, according to circumstances, was nothing more than one who lived by his wits, having neither occupation nor position, and living without visible means of existence.

A prudent woman would have broken with such a doubtful personage. Madame Dolban had not the strength of mind; on the contrary, she gave herself up to him entirely; her purse was open to him, and he lived at her house, of which he was the absolute master. Moreover, Dufresne availed himself without scruple of his friend's little fortune, assuring her that he would invest it in such a manner as to treble her capital.

Led by a hidden motive, Dufresne frequently

informed himself in regard to Adeline and her husband. At length, one day he expressed a desire to visit them. Madame Dolban immediately got ready. She took her little cousin, in order to avert any suspicion of a too intimate friendship with a young man whom she wished to present at Madame Germeuil's.

Dufresne had mental qualities, a knowledge of the ways of society, and sufficient wit to allow him to be very agreeable when he wished; and in the home of the young married people he did everything that was possible to please each one. Obsequious, engaging, even with Madame Germeuil (he knew that gallantry still pleases mammas), he was courteous, reserved and respectful to Adeline; but it was, above all, when with Edouard that he brought into play all the resources of his mind, thus entirely winning Murville's confidence, which he immediately applied to his own purpose of studying the character, learning the tastes and sounding the sentiments of the young husband. Everything took on an air of festivity in the dwelling at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges. Three extra people in a house make a great change. They sang, they played the piano, they walked, they made shooting and fishing excursions. Time rolled quickly on for Edouard, who felt the need of society; but it appeared long to Adeline, who could not find a moment during the day to be alone with her beloved.

On the third day after their arrival Madame Dolban spoke of returning to Paris, but Edouard insisted on their remaining for a few days longer. He did not wish to part with Dufresne. Together they went out to shoot or walk in the morning, before the ladies were up; Murville was delighted with his new friend, whose intellect and cheerfulness, as well as a kindred humor, a conformity of tastes, made Dufresne necessary to him, and made the need of his presence part of the happiness of his friendship. Adeline could not be jealous of this novel connection; however, she experienced a secret pang at seeing that love for her did not entirely fill her husband's heart to the exclusion of every other sentiment. Love is often egotistic, friendship even carries suspicion; that which could for a moment entice the beloved object seems like a theft to this exigent god. But such an excess of love is always excusable; it does not appear a burden until one ceases to divide it.

Madame Dolban and her party took leave of the young married people. Adeline was pleased to see them go; she could now be alone with Edouard; she could converse with him without reserve in regard to their plans for the future, for the education of their child, and on all the sweet pleasures of their family life. Murville parted from his friend with regret; but he had invited Dufresne to visit him often, and to pass at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges all the time that he could spare from his business.

In the evening Adeline took her husband's arm, led him toward the garden, and expressed to him the pleasure she experienced in being again alone with him; she tenderly pressed his hand in hers, and looked at him with her beautiful eyes brimful of love. But he was absent, preoccupied; while answering his wife he seemed to be thinking of something other than that she was speaking of. Adeline perceived it and sighed, and their walk ended sooner than usual.

The next day when they met at breakfast Edouard spoke of Dufresne, and of the pleasure he had received in making his acquaintance. He was a charming man, full of wit and of resources, one who could not fail of success and to make a brilliant fortune.

"But, my dear," said Adeline, "it seems to me that you cannot yet be very well acquainted with Monsieur Dufresne."

"Indeed," said Mamma Germeuil, "I think Monsieur Dufresne very courteous; he is very agreeable in society; and, besides, Madame Dolban must have known him for a long time. But still, my dear Edouard, you have only known him for a week, for one must not count your wedding-day. You were then too greatly preoccupied to notice him."

"Oh, yes," said Adeline, sighing; "on that day he thought of nobody but me."

"Truly, ladies, you are peculiar. Must a long

period elapse before one can know or judge anyone? As for me, two days are sufficient. Besides, what interest could Dufresne have in dissembling with us? He doesn't need our services; and, as you are aware, in the world, interest is man's constant monitor. But outside of that why should he constrain himself to play a part? Dufresne has a fortune; he does business."

"What business?"

"Oh, business on 'Change, — trade, speculation; finally, he is interested in some very promising affairs, he tells me."

"Has he a place of business? a position? Is he an attorney? a stockbroker?"

"No — no; but one who is neither of those may still make his way. Besides, ladies, pardon me for saying that you understand nothing of such matters."

"Truly, my dear, you are extremely polite. Why should you imagine us to be less capable of judging what will or will not accrue to our benefit than are men?"

"Because you have not been educated to understand business."

"My dear," said Madame Germeuil, "education does not give intellect or judgment. Believe me, women can give very good counsels, while men are nearly always wrong if they reject them. The only advice I can now give you is that you will do well to avoid forming too suddenly an

intimate connection with a man whom you have known only for a week. Friendship should not be so quickly accorded."

"But Edouard is so good himself, so easily —"

"Oh, I know how to appreciate people; I assure you that Dufresne's friendship will be very advantageous to me."

"How is that?"

"The deuce! I wish to do as he does; and in order to augment our fortune I also shall make money. Besides, I feel that a man cannot live without occupation. When we are in Paris I do not walk morning and evening; I can neither hunt nor fish."

"That is what I said to you when you wished to resign your position," said Madame Germeuil; "but then you would not listen to me."

"My dear mamma, when I had remained for twenty years shut up in an office, to what had it led me? — a prospect of being made sub-chief, of being some years after retired on a pension, Beautiful perspective! In place of that I can become rich in one day."

"Why, Edouard, are you ambitious?"

"I am not exactly ambitious, my dear Adeline; but even if it were so, our family will soon be increased, and surely it is nothing out of the way that one should think of the prosperity of his children."

"Very true," said Madame Germeuil; "but

sometimes in following vain chimeras one loses the certainty which he possesses."

"Oh, rest assured, ladies, I shall be misled by no vain chimeras. I shall make a sure thing of it. I will only act when I am sure of the facts, and advance slowly; and besides, Dufresne will advise me."

The conversation ended thus. Edouard went to reflect upon his new plans for making a fortune, Madame Germeuil sadly reëntered her room, and Adeline went alone into the garden to dream.

CHAPTER X

The Return to Paris. The Man of Business

Not many days had elapsed before M. Dufresne again visited his friends at Villeneuve-Saint-Georges. Edouard received him as though he were an old friend, Madame Germeuil only politely, and Adeline rather coldly. The visitor had a great deal to say about his business, his speculations, his investments, his big enterprises, — all of which delighted and dazzled Murville, who was consumed with impatience to launch himself in the new career of which his friend had opened to him such a delightful vista. He was also provoked by his mother-in-law's lack of confidence in this way of making a fortune, and was extremely desirous of proving to her the falsity of her fears.

Despite all the inducements that Edouard could offer, Dufresne could only stay one day with him. His time, so he said, was too precious, and his business interests recalled him to Paris. But the season was advancing; the Murvilles could not stay much longer in the country, which was fast losing its verdure; it was the end of October,

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EDOUARD.

PHOTOGRAVURE FROM ORIGINAL DRAWING BY WILLIAM GLACKENS

and they had already been there nearly six months. Edouard greeted with joy the hour of their return to Paris. Adeline tenderly reproached him; Madame Germeuil refrained from speech, but already she feared for the future, for things were not going as she had hoped when her daughter was married to Murville. The latter was feeble in character and irresolute, and Adeline did everything according to his wishes.

"Ah," said the good mamma to herself, "my daughter is too loving and too sensitive; she is not the right woman for Edouard. She should be the mistress, but she only knows how to kiss and sigh; and, should he do anything foolish, she would not have the strength of will to oppose him. Let us hope, however, it will not reach that point."

They returned to Paris, and there Edouard sought to realize the plans which he had formed. Every day he went on 'Change and frequented the cafés where the business men congregated. He had not speculated as yet, but he listened, he walked, he chatted, he made acquaintances; he was often with Dufresne, who promised to allow his friend to share in his brilliant speculations. Besides, when business is not doing, one passes the time very agreeably in joking, recounting the anecdotes of the day, in talking of theatres, balls, fashions, concerts, and love adventures. The pursuit of money does not prevent one from being

conversant with current literature, music and dancing. While taking note of affairs on 'Change in London or Vienna, one also learns the name of the actress who will play in the new piece; one occupies himself with selling stock and letting a box at the Bouffons; one vaunts the probity of some merchant and the originality of Lord Byron, the punctuality of a broker and the pirouettes of Paul; one knows the cause of the last failure, and analyzes the drama which causes a furore; one knows who went to a banker's last ball, and into his wife's box at the theatre. Finally, one knows everything and everybody, for one discusses it all. One makes, at all these meetings, peace and war, rain and shine; one divides, one reunites, one enlarges empires with the end of a cane or switch; one knows the cabinet secrets of every power. But, on returning to one's wife, one does not perceive all that has passed during his absence.

Adeline regretted the beautiful days which she had passed in the country in the first days of her marriage. However, her husband loved her still; she did not doubt that; but she saw him less often, and when he was with her he did not, as formerly, talk of love, constancy, conjugal happiness, but assured her that presently he should have some very successful business — some speculations by which he should make considerable profit.

"But what need have we of so much money,

my dear?" said Adeline, pressing him in her arms. "I shall soon be a mother, which is for me the greatest and best of good fortune; with your love, I desire no other."

"My dearest, what you say is all very pretty; I share your feelings, but I see farther than do you. Don't trouble yourself; we shall be very happy some day."

"Ah, my dear, never happier than now, never happier than we have been; before you knew Dufresne you did not occupy yourself away from me."

"Come, you are always talking about Dufresne. You do not like him; you have taken an aversion to him. What has he done to deserve it? He has given me good advice, he has put me in the way of making a fortune; I do not see anything in that to make you detest him."

"I detest nobody."

"You received him very coldly, as well as Madame Dolban."

"I gave him the same reception as anyone else."

"Oh, no doubt; you would like to live like a bear — never see any society."

"I have not said so; but formerly my companionship sufficed you, and you did not find society necessary to entertain you in our home."

"There, now you are crying; tears are illogical; you are childish. You know that I love you, — that I love none other than you."

"I won't cry any more, dear; and if you wish, we will entertain a great deal."

"Oh, I don't say that; we shall see — if my plans turn out well. Dufresne says it would be well for me to give a few parties — some punch — with a violin, and a card-table. Oh, by the way, don't speak of it yet before your mother; she is so peculiar."

"I will say nothing of it, my dear."

Edouard left for business and Adeline remained alone. She gave free course to her tears then, for she could not hide from herself that her husband was not the same. However, he loved her tenderly, he was not unfaithful; why should she grieve over a change which was natural and which nothing could prevent? Eight months of marriage had not lessened Adeline's love, which was still ardent and passionate; but a man's heart has need of repose in its affections; it does not know how to love for long with the same intoxication; it beats furiously, then it stops; it is all aflame, then it lapses into its former coldness; a trifle suffices to extinguish or to rekindle its fires.

The young wife sought consolation in these reflections, and acknowledged to herself that she must at any cost conceal her disappointment from her mother; but she could not change in respect to Dufresne, who inspired her with an antipathy for which she could not account. When near her he was always polite and deferential, obliging and

attentive, without ceasing to be respectful; why, then, should she take offence at him? She knew nothing against him, but she did not like him, and his glance caused in her an uneasiness, an awkwardness, which was not natural; she remarked in him a kind of constraint which she could not define. When she appeared, Dufresne seemed embarrassed; he left if Madame Dolban came in; he was silent if by any chance he was alone with his friend's wife; but his eyes followed all Adeline's movements, and he had an expression which she could not endure.

Some days after the conversation he had had with his wife, Edouard came into the house wearing a look of triumph; his face was radiant, his eyes sparkled with pleasure.

"What is the matter, my son? What has happened to you?" asked Madame Germeuil. "You appear very well pleased."

"Indeed, I have cause to be so."

"You will doubtless allow us to share in your gratification, my dear."

"Yes, ladies, and you will now, I hope, cease to twit me with deluding myself with chimeras. By the most lucky chance, I have lately made the acquaintance of a wealthy stranger who is about to settle in France. He wished to find a fine mansion all furnished, in one of the most beautiful parts of the city. I found one for him; he saw it, was delighted, bought it, and gave me six

thousand francs for my trouble, and the seller gave me as much more for my commission. What do you say to that? Is it not delightful? There are twelve thousand francs made in a moment."

"Yes, my son; but for three months you have been on the lookout for this moment."

"Twelve thousand francs! It well repays the trouble I have taken."

"That is true; but such profitable strokes of business must be rare."

"They are made by others."

"All are not so fortunate."

"Ah, if one could make twelve thousand francs every day, one would be too lucky."

"It occurs to me that you had no need of Dufresne's assistance in this matter."

"Oh, he'll help me to many good things yet. But to be successful it is necessary that I should have an office. You understand that when my clients come to speak to me I can't receive them in a drawing-room or a bedroom; a well-fitted office is necessary. That will be imposing, and as here there is no place convenient for one we must move elsewhere."

"What! you will leave this house, my son?"

"Oh, my dear, it was here we were united by mamma; it was here that marriage completed our vows, and I have found it so comfortable."

"My dearest, one is comfortable anywhere — above all, when one is rich. We will take a still

better lodging; this drawing-room is much too small."

"It is large enough to receive one's friends."

"Yes; but one does not only receive one's friends: one has acquaintances."

"Do you not think you will attract attention if you live above your means, my son?"

"Madame, I am going to make a fortune, which is, I believe, a praiseworthy ambition. Why should I not attempt what a thousand others have essayed with success? Am I less worthy? Have I less capability than my forebears? I will prove the contrary to you. Look at that manufacturer whose name is in everybody's mouth, and whose wealth is fabulous, and his credit unlimited. He came to Paris without a sou, knowing only how to write and calculate. He was a little clerk in the store which he now owns; but he had ambition; he worked hard, and everything prospered with him. That financier, whose operations on 'Change are so immense, came here from his village begging hospitality at the inns, sleeping on the straw, and eating nothing but bread, happy if only he had enough of that to satisfy his appetite. He stopped in Paris on the Place de Peron, uncertain whether he should ask alms or whether he should throw himself into the water. A merchant saw him and gave him a letter to carry. The zeal and promptitude which he evinced in fulfilling this commission interested others in his favor.

Each one chose him as his messenger. As soon as he had saved a little money he gambled in stocks on his own account, and made money whether they rose or fell; in short, he became a millionaire. I could cite a hundred similar examples; and, since from nothing one can gain everything, it seems to me that it must be still easier to enrich one's self when one already has means at his command."

"When one has nothing one runs no risk of ruining himself, my son."

"O madame! only fools ruin themselves."

"It is better to be a fool than a thief, and many people have amassed a fortune at the expense of others."

"I think, madame, you can hardly believe me capable of so enriching myself."

"Undoubtedly not; but order and economy are before all things necessary; it was those qualities which enriched the manufacturer and the financier whom you cited to me a moment since, and not giving soirées and extravagant balls."

"Other times, other methods, madame; today, one does his business while enjoying himself. One negotiates a sale while drinking punch, one signs a contract at a billiard or card table, and one buys consols while dancing an Anglaise. Well, I must say I see nothing out of the way in that. That is what is called doing business cheerfully."

"Yes, monsieur, but not substantially. As for

me, I do not choose as my banker the one who gives the best parties; and, if it is your intention to leave this lodging to proceed in that manner, I warn you that I will not live with you."

Edouard made no response, but took his hat and went out in a very bad humor, protesting against women who wished to meddle in matters of which they understood nothing. Madame Germeuil remained with her daughter.

"Ah, mamma," said Adeline, throwing herself into her mother's arms, "you are not angry with Edouard? Alas! I am the culpable one; it was I who invited him to leave the position he occupied. But how could I foresee this? It is that Dufresne; it is his counsels which have turned my husband's head."

"My dear Adeline, it was necessary, in the first days of your marriage, to obtain the mastery of your husband's mind, to habituate him to conform his will to yours; then you could have easily managed him in this. But you did just the contrary."

"I sought nothing but to please him, and we had then only one will. But I shall soon be a mother; I await that event with impatience, for I am sure that in caressing his child Edouard will forget all these ideas of riches — of grandeur."

"May it be as you say!"

The term fixed by nature approached; Edouard felt that this was no time to change his residence,

he spoke no more of his plans, and Adeline believed that he had renounced them. Presently she gave to the world a pretty little girl, a faithful image of her mother's beauty. Edouard wished that Dufresne should be the child's godfather; but Madame Germeuil refused to act with him, and Edouard felt it necessary to yield and to take in his place an old gentleman of means, very upright, very settled and very methodical, who gave three boxes of bonbons and two pairs of gloves to his gossip, and promised to go every week to the young mother's house to get news of his goddaughter.

Edouard said not a word; but he only awaited his wife's complete recovery, in order to execute his plans, inwardly desiring that Madame Germeuil should persist in refusing to change her residence, in order that he might no longer have near him a mother-in-law whose counsels and reprimands had commenced to displease him.

The fact that she was a mother completed Adeline's happiness; she nursed her child herself, in spite of all that Edouard could say to prove that it was not done in the best society. But this time Adeline resisted her husband; maternal love carried her away, and this new sentiment moderated a little the force of that other feeling which had reigned like a despot in her heart. For some time Madame Dolban had been coming less frequently to the Murvilles' house; Adeline and her mother

were ignorant of the cause, but they were not displeased to see less of Dufresne, who usually accompanied Madame Dolban. They thought that Edouard, in seeing him more rarely, gave himself up less to the new ideas of fortune which had been suggested by Dufresne to the credulous and headstrong young man.

The ladies deceived themselves; Dufresne was far from neglecting Edouard, whose character he perfectly understood; he knew all the advantages he could gain from his acquaintance, and had, besides, large plans, as the events which we shall presently set forth will, without doubt, show. But as a cunning man Dufresne awaited the right moment to put his designs into execution. He saw that Madame Germeuil did not like him; the presence of Adeline's mother was inimical to his plans; and he adroitly sought to widen the gap between the good lady and her son-in-law, and soon found a means of separating them by fostering in Edouard's mind the idea of taking a larger residence, in order that he might give brilliant entertainments, a course which he knew would awaken Madame Germeuil's prudence. The two friends saw each other every day; they passed together a part of each morning, and when Murville left his home in the evening it was to frequent the houses where Dufresne had agreed to meet him. Edouard could no longer dispense with his friend; he wished to do nothing without

consulting him, undertake nothing without having seen him. But if his wife advised him, or his mother-in-law made some remonstrance, Edouard was angry, and comported himself as though he wished to be the master; while he was the mere puppet of one who knew how to flatter his tastes. Strange character! — feeble by nature, stubborn without reason, wishing to be firm, and not to allow himself to be directed by others, but not having enough wit to discern that which was for his advantage. It was thus that Edouard gave himself up to the will of him who counselled him in secret to have perseverance and consistency in his plans, because he knew well that it was necessary to speak thus to a feeble man, who was no more in his eyes than ductile matter, which he could shape according to his desire.

Adeline's health did not suffer under the new cares she had assumed; on the contrary, her features became softer, her eyes tenderer, her walk more graceful. She was charming when she carried her child in her arms and went out in the morning to give it an airing. Someone other than Murville thought Adeline more beautiful; but a husband rarely evinces the same observation; on the contrary, he does not perceive it. It is his fault if others remark the beauty of his wife, admiring that which he does not see, praising that which he has ceased to praise, and cherishing that which he neglects. It is this, to speak plainly,

that husbands do not reflect upon, about which they hardly ever make themselves uneasy; and their indifference very often plays them an extremely bad turn.

Another man observed all that Edouard failed to remark; he followed Adeline when she did not perceive him, he admired her many charms and devoured them with his eyes. A violent passion mastered him; he waited only a favorable opportunity to endeavor to make her share his intoxication. He had, however, very little hope that she would love him; he knew that Adeline was virtue itself, that she lived only for her husband and her daughter. But to his ardor there was no obstacle, no barrier, that he lacked resolve to overturn. Nothing could stop the raging torrent engorged by the storms; nothing could affright his love, if one can so denominate the unbridled desire, the frenzy, the jealousy, which for a long time had filled his heart. He had decided to try all, to undertake all, to dare all, in order to compass his desires in regard to Adeline. His passion, hidden so long, had but gathered force; the fire that devoured him would engulf everything when it should burst forth. But this mysterious man, whose love was just then a secret, — who was he? You are acquainted with him, reader, and I wager you have already divined who it is.

Edouard, who was still more deeply immersed in business of which he understood nothing, but

in which he appeared most sedulous, rented a handsome house, a fashionable carriage, and purchased magnificent furniture in the latest taste; he furnished a fine office garnished on all sides with maps, beneath which were boxes — empty, to tell the truth; but presently they would contain the documents of clients who could not fail to arrive in crowds. While waiting for them to arrive, our man hired a clerk, who spent his time in reading the Gazette and in cutting his pens. He conducted Adeline to her new home; she looked at everything, smiled, and said nothing. Madame Germeuil, on the contrary, burst into reproaches, and quarrelled violently with her son-in-law; she predicted that he would ruin himself. Edouard obstinately maintained the contrary, and Madame Germeuil departed from her son-in-law's house, vowing she would never return; she would not even yield to her daughter's tears, — tears for which in the depths of her heart the good mother reproached herself. She felt that she should have given her daughter to a more resolute, a more reasonable man, rather than to one so feeble, so wanting in force; one who lacked courage to confess his faults, and was too stubborn to repair them.

After the mother's departure, another scene ensued between the married couple. Adeline could not refrain from reproaching her husband also; she begged him to seek her mother, but he was

stubborn and obstinately refused to be reconciled, and informed his wife that he was determined to have his own way, that all remonstrances would prove useless, that he would not deviate from the line of conduct he had marked out for himself, and that he did not intend to allow himself to be led by women.

Thus life in the splendid home of the new man of business was inaugurated with tears; but Murville did not trouble himself about such trifles; his head was filled with matters of much greater importance. Dufresne thought that he saw a way in which Edouard ought to make fifty thousand francs out of a wealthy shipowner who had just arrived in Paris, and was looking for investments, about which he knew little or nothing. It was necessary, in order to make the acquaintance of this precious man, to give a party, a ball, to which he would be brought by a third person. The ball was fixed upon, and, following his friend's counsels, Edouard made extraordinary preparations for an affair which should determine his status in the fashionable world. It is true that the expenses of this party were enormous. The twelve thousand francs which Edouard had made some time before was partly disbursed; it was necessary to make some advances; he had had to dip into his principal to pay for his furniture and the decoration of his house. But all that was nothing; he must sow in order to reap. This was Du-

fresne's maxim, and his follower showed that he found it a satisfactory one. Never had Edouard appeared happier, more brilliant, more at his ease. He had a carriage, a jockey, diamonds. He was doing a very successful business.

CHAPTER XI

A Declaration of Love, if One Wishes to Call it So

"Adeline, my dearest," said Edouard one morning to his wife, "I am giving a party to-morrow, — a ball; you will necessarily have to do the honors."

"You are giving a party, dear Edouard? And to whom, may I ask? Oh, you wish to be reconciled with mamma, and you are taking this means, is it not so?"

"The matter in question has nothing to do with your mother. She is a woman who meddles with matters she does not understand, and who, because it is according to her taste to live in a small circle, would prevent us also from enlarging ours. You must agree that that is not common sense, we are young and have our lives to live. The quarrel is of her making, and, later on, when I shall have an income of fifty thousand livres, I am fully assured she will forgive me for not having listened to her advice."

"But that may not be for some time to come."

"Sooner than you think, madame, and I am bestirring myself accordingly."

"And is that why you are giving a party?"

"Exactly."

"How many people do you expect?"

"Oh, don't be uneasy about that; we shall have a great crush, but that is necessary nowadays; it is quite the fashion; if people are not pushed and squeezed in a drawing-room, they do not think they are being entertained."

"Oh, my dear, what nonsense!—for you to say that."

"It is not nonsense; I see something of good society, while you are rocking your daughter's cradle."

"Oh, I am well aware that you are never at home with me now."

"It is necessary for me to go into society, in order to make acquaintances."

"Unprofitable acquaintances sometimes."

"Good Heavens! I am not a child. I understand my own affairs; but it would seem, to listen to you and your mother, that I am incapable of conducting them."

"My dear, I never said that; but I can't help regretting the time when I alone was sufficient to your pleasure. Then you passed every moment near me; you did not go into society. Well, were you not happy then?"

"Of course I was."

"For what reason, then, have you changed your mode of living?"

"For what reason? — for what reason? That is a very singular question. One cannot always be making love — can one?"

"Oh, I perceive that; but I did not think I should learn it after one year of marriage."

"Come, you are always reproaching me; women are never reasonable."

"I have not reproached you, my dear. Give parties if it pleases you; I will never oppose you again."

"You are charming. You are not stubborn, like your mother. And I tell you again, all this is for our good; so make the necessary preparations. I have already told them what to do, arranged everything, and ordered everything. You will have nothing to do but see that my orders are executed."

"Very well. But what shall I say to the people whom I do not know?"

"Oh, don't trouble yourself about that; you need only bow — smile on everyone. With your grace and wit you are always charming."

"I wish to be so for you only."

"Am I unfaithful to you? I am so truly virtuous — "

"Some day they will make a little box to keep you in."

"Don't be afraid; I love no one but you. I must go and issue some more invitations. Busy yourself with the preparations."

Edouard kissed his wife and departed. Adeline, to please him, informed herself as to all he wished done for the morrow. She was dismayed at the magnitude of the expense, but she could not oppose him. After giving her orders, the young wife went to see her mother, to whom she confided her sorrows, of which, however, she hid a great part, that she might not prejudice Madame Germeuil further against her husband. "Ah," said Adeline, "so long as he is faithful to me I have no cause to complain. I can forgive him everything except indifference; that I could not support."

On the morrow, from daybreak, everything was upside down in the Murville mansion; the servants could not perform the work that had to be done everywhere, and workmen came to place the hangings, chandeliers, lustres, and jars of flowers along the balustrade of the staircase; decorators, upholsterers and florists filled up the drawing-rooms, and mingled with the valets and the people of the house. Soon afterward came the caterers and pastrycooks, and the purveyors of ices and lemonade, who took possession of kitchen and pantries, and decorated beforehand the buffets and sideboards, which would be more sumptuously garnished in the evening, and would offer at the same time all that would please the eyes and gratify the taste. Adeline, passing through several rooms to go to Edouard's office, was stunned by

the noise, the shouts, the commotion; it did not seem like her house. At last she perceived Edouard, who was walking about the rooms and looking on with an air of satisfaction at the preparations for the party.

"How is this?" he said to his wife, when he saw her far off. "What do you think of all this?"

"That I cannot understand how anyone can give himself so much trouble in order to receive people whom he does not know, and who will consider themselves under no obligation to him for the care he is giving himself to treat them thus."

"But, dearest, think for a moment what a reputation I shall make. The deuce! I shall trouble myself no more about some of the people whom I shall receive. I care nothing for their friendship, but I do care that they should say in society, 'M. Murville's party was charming; nothing was lacking; everything was in the latest fashion. It must have cost him a pretty penny.' You understand that will establish my credit. They will suppose me to possess a considerable fortune, and I shall have more business than I can do. Remember to dress yourself handsomely, and put on your diamonds. They are not so fine as I could wish; but at some time I hope to make you a present of a magnificent set."

"My dearest, you know well that I desire none of those things. Your love only —"

"You will make yourself late; go and dress."

The moment for the gathering arrived. Between nine and ten o'clock the carriages and the pedestrians — for they come always, even to the grandest balls — were crowding into the courtyard of Murville's mansion. They pressed into the vestibule. The coachmen swore at one another as to the right of way. The young women, in their pelisses, jumped lightly with one foot on the first step of the staircase, and waited — one for her mother, another for her husband — to go up to the drawing-rooms. The young officer gracefully presented himself, his body enveloped in a double cape of crimson velvet which hid nearly all his face, leaving nothing to be seen but the tip of his nose. He offered his hand to a young matron, whose fear of the horses in the court had caused her to become separated from her escort. The knight of the mantle could see nothing but some very expressive eyes and some locks of hair, for the rest was hidden under the hood of a pelisse; but he saw enough to divine charming features and the figure of a nymph. He softly pressed the hand she confided to him. He engaged his unknown lady for the first contra-dance, and hope was awakened within him before he entered the antechamber, which was crowded. In the corner the ladies gave a final glance to their dresses, which had been rumpled in the carriages, and gave the last touch to their toilets. Farther off, in a dimly

lighted embrasure, some economical bank clerks took their fine pumps from their pockets and put them on in place of their shoes, which they wrapped with their gaiters, with great care, in a great sheet of paper, and pushed under some large piece of furniture, where no one would displace them. Having finished this little exchange, they carefully drew their shirt frills beneath their vests; they put on fresh cravats, tying the knots, passed their hands through their hair, to ruffle it or smoothe it, as it best suited their physiognomies; then, drawing themselves up with pride, they entered the drawing-rooms with an air of impudence and conceit, hoping to lead everyone to believe that each had arrived in his carriage.

The drawing-room was already filled with women of all ages; for it is not by the dress, it is only by the face, that one can distinguish the mother from the daughter, the aunt from the niece. The men strolled about, glass in hand, and, despite this little accessory, almost touched noses with the ladies while grimacing before them; while the latter smiled and simpered at them, in place of resenting their insolent manner of looking. The crowd presently became so large that one could hardly move through it.

The signal was given for the dancing to commence. A very good orchestra, conducted by Collinet, played delicious quadrilles, which invited to pleasure; some delightful airs, taken from the best

works of the great masters, serving as themes for the different figures of the dance. How could one avoid entering into the spirit of the dance when one turned, or balanced, or tripped to the music of Rossini, Mozart, Chérubini, or Boieldieu? The ear was not less charmed with the execution. The modern contra-dances are little concertos for wind and stringed instruments; it is necessary to have talent to execute them. We have left to the poor blind people airs similar to the Monaco, the Perigourdine and the Furstemburg. They must be artists who play the quadrilles of Weber, of Collinet, of Rubner, etc. The space was limited; they trod on one another's feet, they jostled, but they danced; that was the essential thing. How delightful for the young person who wished to show her grace, and for the elderly dame who imagined herself light on her feet!

Those for whom music and the dance had no charms seated themselves at a card-table; there they yielded to their passion for play, seeking to read on their partner's face the cards that he held in his hands; they forgot wife or daughter, as very often these ladies in the drawing-rooms forgot those who were occupied at the card-table. But a circle formed about the players. The betting began, and soon became considerable. The young men who were not engaged with the ladies or the dancing waited with anxiety to see if their adversary should turn a king; their blood was

ablaze; the sight of gold, the hope of gain, fascinated them, and more than one left the card-table with empty pockets, and were obliged on the morrow to refuse money to their tailors and bootmakers; while our economical friends of the shoes and gaiters allowed themselves to be seduced by this example, saying to themselves in a low tone, while taking off their pumps, that they would have done better to take a carriage and neither to have played nor betted at écarté.

Some others went to the sideboard to console themselves, where they stuffed themselves with pastry and other refreshments, the most greedy taking the choicest dainties on the pretext of carrying them to the ladies. What waste was committed by this mob! The plates they upset! the poultry which they rejected, to take another dish, of which they left three parts! the creams which they gouged out! the bonbons which disappeared almost before one had time to have one! Collations are always thus partaken at these immense gatherings; the buffet is always pillaged, and the young people who surround it look as if they had not had anything to eat for a week. What a peculiar way of conducting themselves for people of fashion!

In the midst of the tumult and the crowd, Adeline sought to perceive some acquaintance, but most of the faces were unknown to her. Tired of hearing the mawkish or extravagant compliments

addressed to her by men with whom she had no acquaintance, and bored of posing as the mark for these gentlemen's lorgnettes, the unhappy young woman seized a moment, when each one was occupied to his own taste, to go and see if her daughter was sleeping, and to taste, in kissing her, the only pleasure this evening could afford her. To go to the room where little Ermance was sleeping, Adeline had to go to a distant part of the house; for she had not wished that her baby should be awakened by the noise. She passed through several half-lighted rooms, and when she reached her daughter she stopped before the cradle and contemplated Ermance, who slept peacefully. Feeling reassured, Adeline left her child and started to rejoin her guests; but at the entrance to a boudoir which was all in darkness, and which adjoined the baby's room, she perceived somebody glide along by the hangings. A feeling of fright seized her mind.

"Who is there?" she said immediately.

"Do not be afraid, madame; I am extremely sorry to have startled you."

Adeline recognized Dufresne's voice and felt reassured.

"What are you looking for here?" she said.

"The noise, the heat, affected me, and I was pleased to get far from it to rest for a moment."

Adeline took a light from a neighboring room and carried it to that in which Dufresne was

resting; the latter followed her movements with his eyes, and appeared extremely agitated.

"If you feel indisposed, I will go and get you something to take."

"Oh, no, madame; please stay here. Your presence is a hundred times more precious to me."

Dufresne took Adeline's hand; and she, astonished at his extraordinary tone, and at the fervor with which he spoke, did not know how to answer him, but stood before him much embarrassed. Dufresne squeezed tightly the hand he held between his own; Adeline, frightened, withdrew it immediately, and was about to go, when he placed himself before her and stopped her.

"What do you desire of me?" she said to him, in a voice changed by a fear for which she could not account.

"That you should listen to me, madame; that you should deign to hear me."

"What have you to say to me which demands so much mystery? We could have chatted well enough in the drawing-room."

"No, madame, no — better here! Oh, for a long time I have deferred this moment; but I feel that it is impossible longer to hide the passion which rages within me. No, I am no longer master of myself when I see you, when I contemplate your beauty, without expressing to you the ardor which consumes me."

"What are you saying, monsieur?"

"That I love you, that I adore you, beautiful Adeline; and that you must be to me —"

"O Heavens! what do I hear?"

"Know everything at last; know that, since the moment I first saw you, you have been the object of all my thoughts, all my desires, the mainspring of all my actions. I should not have formed an intimacy with Madame Dolban except as a means of gaining an introduction to your house; the hope of one day pleasing you has alone prevented my committing some extravagance since the day of your marriage, — that day on which I was first introduced to you. But what have I not suffered in constraining my feelings, in hiding from all eyes the flame which devoured me, and what torments have I not endured in seeing you lavish upon my fortunate rival the caresses he received so indifferently, while to me a single one would be the height of felicity!"

"You have said more than enough, monsieur; I have restrained my indignation, but I shall no longer be mistress of myself if I hear you further."

"Your indignation! And how have I deserved it?"

"To call my husband your rival, and, as the price of his friendship, to try to seduce his wife. Such conduct is shocking."

"Such conduct is very common, and seems shocking to you only because you do not share

my feelings; for, if you loved me, in place of being a monster in your eyes, I should be an unhappy man consumed by an insurmountable passion, suffering for a long time and hiding his pain from all eyes, and even from her who had given birth to it. Such conduct, therefore, should not seem criminal to you; so much love and constancy should excite at least your pity; you should accord me that, madame; you should listen to me without anger, and perhaps a softer feeling will plead my cause in your heart and aid me in obtaining the price of all my sufferings. There, madame; that is what you should consider. I adore you,—that is my crime; it will cease to be one if you share my passion. Success excuses the most daring enterprises, and I shall not be guilty unless you hate me."

"Your words, monsieur, do not justify you in my eyes. I can excuse your love, but not the hope that I shall share it. One is not the master of his heart, but he is the master of his actions, and yours are unworthy a man of honor."

"Madame!"

"Never again speak to me of your love; it is only on this condition that I consent to forget your indiscretion and forbear to reveal it to my husband."

"Your husband! He would not believe you."

"Why do you say that?"

"No, madame; he will never believe anything

you say against me. Do you think that I have not foreseen all? I have such a hold over your husband's mind that he sees only with my eyes and acts only in accordance with my wishes. He is a machine which I set in motion at will. But tremble, if you reject my vows, at the power I exercise over the weak Edouard; you will learn then to know me; you will repent yourself of your unworthy pride. But it will be too late; my hate will be as vindictive as my love is strong."

"Abominable man! I feel that the horror with which you have always inspired me is redoubled; but I defy your menaces and forbid you to repeat them before me."

Dufresne's face at that moment expressed fury and scorn; his muscles contracted, a bitter smile died upon his lips, while his eyes darted fire. The frightened Adeline tried to flee; he stopped her, encircling her with his strong arms; he pressed her to himself, and placed his burning lips on the trembling ones of his victim; he was about to carry himself to the last excess. The young woman uttered a piercing cry. Somebody came running, steps were heard approaching; Dufresne opened a window which looked into the garden, leaped out and disappeared.

Some footmen and some of the male guests entered the room and surrounded Adeline, inquiring the cause of her agitation; her eyes wandered at random about the room, but the sight of the

Adeline tried to flee; he stopped her, encircling her with his strong arms.

PHOTOGRAVURE FROM ORIGINAL DRAWING BY LOUIS MEYNELLE.

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still open window recalled to her all that had passed, and she felt the necessity of hiding her emotion.

"What is the matter, madame? What has happened to you?" was earnestly asked of her on all sides.

"I don't know," said she, forcibly repressing her agitation. "I do not feel very well; the heat upset me. I came into this room to get a little air, but in opening that window — a giddiness — I wanted to call somebody, but I had not the strength."

This explanation seemed very natural; they begged Madame Murville not to return to the drawing-rooms, where the excessive heat would only make her ill again. Adeline had no intention of so doing; she could not endure Dufresne's presence. She therefore retired to her own apartment, asking some of them to excuse her to the rest of the company.

She desired her chambermaid to inform Edouard that she wished to see him when he should be at liberty. The domestic delivered the message, but Murville paid little attention to it; he was losing forty louis at écarté with a very pretty young woman who threw most expressive glances at him, who smiled on him, showing the most beautiful teeth in the world, and rested, by accident, no doubt, her little feet upon his. How could one allow himself to win from so agreeable

a player? She pouted so fascinatingly when he refused her cards that he could not resist her. Edouard was completely subjugated, and when, after the dance, she begged him to dry the perspiration on her white back with a handkerchief, his hand tremblingly performed its office. She thanked him, pressed his hand, and invited him to come and take his revenge at her card party.

At five o'clock in the morning they danced the Anglais, according to custom, to end the ball. They leapt, they entangled themselves, they wore themselves out, they made much noise and pushing, and finally they left.

Edouard, with a full heart and an empty purse, retired to his room, thinking of the pretty woman with whom he had played cards, but entirely forgetting his wife who had long been waiting for him.

CHAPTER XII

Blindness. Folly. Weakness

Adeline arose in the night feeling very uneasy about her husband, and very desirous of confiding to him the events of the evening; but on learning that he had returned to his room very late, she decided that she would not disturb him, but would defer until he awakened her disclosure in regard to what had passed between herself and Dufresne, hoping that Edouard would at last know the former for the scoundrel he really was.

Edouard rose at last, and came down to a late breakfast. Adeline was waiting for him, and reproached him tenderly for his indifference to her request the evening before, but he scarcely listened to her; he seemed absorbed, preoccupied, and complained of a violent headache, saying that he should go out to drive it away.

Upon this Adeline detained him, saying that she had something of the utmost importance to tell him, and that he really must give her a few moments. Astonished at his wife's tone, Edouard reseated himself mechanically and begged her to be as brief as possible, since momentous business matters called him out. They dismissed the

servants, and Adeline recounted to her husband the conversation of the evening before between herself and Dufresne. Edouard listened at first with indifference; but presently vexation and impatience were depicted on his face.

"Well, my dear," said Adeline to him, "what do you think now of our sincere friend?"

"What do I think? I think that you are making an offence of a trifle, and an important matter of that which has no foundation."

"What, my dear!"

"Undoubtedly so. A declaration to a woman! Good God! is that a thing so rare that it is necessary to make a disturbance about it? Pretty women receive them every day, and attach no more importance to such a trifle than it deserves. But you are frightened at a word; a simple act of gallantry appears to you an attempt at betrayal. It is not necessary to take things so — Besides, I know you; you dislike, or, rather, you detest, Dufresne. For a long time you have sought to lower him in my esteem, and you seize on this as a pretext to attain your end; but I warn you that you will not succeed in your enterprise."

"Monsieur, you accuse me! You suspect me of being capable of deceiving you."

"How else can it be? How can you say that Dufresne has not committed all these follies to mock at you and to revenge himself upon you for your aversion, which he could easily perceive?"

"And was that why he had the audacity to kiss me?"

"To kiss you! Come, I admit that he was very wrong to kiss you against your will, and I shall scold him for it. But a mere kiss should not irritate you to this degree."

"You will continue to receive M. Dufresne at your house?"

"Certainly, madame. I do not intend to expose myself to ridicule, and to be pointed at as a jealous husband, and all because someone has dared to kiss you jokingly. That would not be common sense. But, rest assured, I will forbid Dufresne to speak again to you of his flame."

"What, Edouard! you laugh? You can make so little of what I have told you?"

"I do as I ought to do; I know how to conduct myself."

"Alas! I can see that you love me no longer; otherwise, you would be more jealous."

"One may love without jealousy, madame; and, besides — But it is getting late, and my business calls me."

"And this rich shipowner, for whom you gave the party?"

"He could not come."

"Then all your expense and trouble were useless?"

"Useless! No, indeed. Everybody paid me great compliments on my party. It will be very

profitable to me in the end, and I am delighted that I gave it. I must leave you now; I have not a moment."

Edouard quickly left to seek Dufresne, who appeared a little disturbed at seeing him. He recovered himself presently, for it was not to take him to account for what he had said to Madame Murville that Murville had hastened in search of him; it was to chat about the pretty woman with whom he had played at écarté, and to inquire who she was and what rank she held in society; above all, it was that he might express his hopes and desires, which he was not afraid to show freely to his friend.

Dufresne satisfied Edouard's curiosity, and told him that Madame de Geran was the widow of a general, and absolute mistress of her own actions; that she had a large fortune, but that she knew how to spend it rapidly, since she was fond of every pleasure. Dufresne took care to add that many had paid their addresses to the young widow, but that she received them with indifference, treated love as a joke, played with the flames she had kindled, and that her conquest appeared infinitely difficult of accomplishment.

This information augmented Edouard's newborn passion. What happiness it would be to win her from all his rivals!—and Madame de Geran had treated him in such a manner as to give him ground for some hope. The fact is, she had turned

his head; and Dufresne, who easily read the weak and inconstant Murville's heart, took advantage of this moment to speak of what had passed between himself and Adeline, taking care to present the matter as a simple joke, which he did not expect to see treated seriously.

"Yes, yes; I know," said Edouard; "my wife spoke to me about it this morning."

"Ah! she told you?"

"That you are a monster, a scoundrel, a false friend."

"Did she, indeed?"

"And many other things beside; for I warn you, she is furious with you. But never mind; I calmed her. She shall see that she has taken it in the wrong way, and shall learn that you have told me everything."

"I am truly sorry to feel so amused at — But, really, your wife is very peculiar."

"It is owing to her mother, Madame Germeuil, who has filled her head with romantic ideas. Certainly no one would believe she had been brought up in Paris. Oh, it is necessary that she should see something of society. Could you believe that she did not wish to see you again?"

"If my presence is annoying to Madame Murville, I shall take care to keep out of her sight."

"Oh, dear, no; I will not have that, or I shall be angry with you also. I intend that you shall come to my house more frequently than you have

done heretofore. It suits me, and that should be sufficient. Are you not sufficiently my friend to excuse my wife's eccentric manners?"

"Oh, one thing is sure, — my attachment for you knows no bounds."

"Dear Dufresne, wait, that you may see how much confidence I have in you, and how little attention I pay to my wife's stories. I am going to confide in you, and I count on your friendship to help me in this matter."

"I am entirely devoted to you; speak."

"My friend, I love, I adore, Madame de Geran."

"How can that be? You have only known her since yesterday."

"That time has sufficed to make me love her. What would you have? One is not master as regards that; it is a caprice, a weakness, everything that you would — But I have lost my head."

"You, Murville, so reasonable! You, a married man!"

"My dear fellow, do married men conduct themselves any better than bachelors? You know, on the contrary, one does not always wish to keep only to his wife."

"If yours should think as you do?"

"Oh, as to that, I have no cause for anxiety; my wife is virtue itself, and in that she only does her duty for a woman; it is very different — "

"Yes, as to consequences; but as to moral, and

even according to natural law, I consider the fault absolutely equal."

"You are joking; besides, are not the consequences everything? Is the ridicule the same? Does anyone mock at a woman whose husband is unfaithful? No; nothing is said, because that is nothing uncommon; but if a woman is unfaithful — That also is very common, despite the fact that everyone mocks at the poor husband and points a finger at him. Besides, what evil can result from a man's infidelity? None. His partner in guilt is not likely to boast of it. With a woman it is different; her lovers always destroy her reputation, either by their words or their actions, which do not escape the eyes of the slanderers or the curious. Finally, a wife who learns that her husband is unfaithful can only weep and complain, but the husband who takes his wife in flagrante delicto has the right to punish the guilty party. You see from this that the fault is not the same, since the punishment is different."

"I see that we men have made the laws, and in doing so have treated ourselves very well."

"Are you also lecturing me on morals? Really, Dufresne, you are as rigidly virtuous as my wife."

"No, my friend. Oh, you don't know me yet. But I wish, before serving you, to know whether you have weighed well the consequences of this intrigue."

"I have calculated everything; I love Madame

de Geran, and wish to obtain her love. I feel that there is no sacrifice I am not capable of making to attain my end. Do you understand me?"

"Oh, perfectly. Since you have decided that, I will second you; but at least do not reproach me with having led you into it."

"No, indeed, — no; it is I who have begged you to serve me and to help me to hide the affair from my wife."

"You may be perfectly easy; I will take care of that; I assume all that responsibility. When do you expect to go to Madame de Geran's?"

"This evening. But they will play, no doubt."

"Yes, and play high."

"The deuce! and I have no money. That ball drained me dry."

"It will be easy for you to get it. Stocks are exceedingly high. Sell some. Before long they cannot fail to go down. By that time we shall have done some other business, and you will probably be in funds and can buy. You see that will be a good stroke of business to do."

"That's true; you are right. But the stock is in my wife's name."

"Can't you make her sign by telling her you have a splendid speculation in view?"

"Yes; oh, she will sign, I am certain; she will sign anything I wish."

"Profit by her good-humor to sell your stock; I repeat, they are on the point of falling, and in

a few days you can, with much less money, buy the same amount. To save you trouble, I will undertake the operation."

"You will do me a great favor; for I am still a little awkward in these affairs, and without you I should often be embarrassed."

"Fear nothing; act boldly. I'll vouch for it, your party of last evening has given you immense credit. If you needed thirty thousand francs, you could easily find them."

"You delight me. I'll go to my wife; go and wait for me at the café; I'll return shortly with the papers in question."

"I'll await you there; take care what you say to your wife."

"Do you take me for a child? I won't say good-by, my dear Dufresne."

Edouard hurried home; he went up to Adeline's room, where he found her seated with her baby in her arms. On seeing her husband, who did not ordinarily come near her during the day, a sweet hope made her heart beat; she thought that love drew him towards her, and a happy smile illumined her charming features.

Edouard remained silent before his wife; he was embarrassed; he experienced a painful feeling; he felt guilty, but he would not confess it even to himself.

"It is you, dear," said Adeline, in the softest tone. "I am pleased to see you; it is so rarely

now. But come and kiss your daughter." Edouard approached the little one mechanically and kissed her without noticing her infantile beauty. He remained pensive, not knowing how to speak of what had brought him.

"You seem downcast," said Adeline; "if you are in any trouble please let me share it; you have no more sincere or loving friend than your wife."

"I know that, my dear Adeline; but I am in no trouble. No, I am only preoccupied, thinking of some very important business by which I shall make a great deal of money."

"Always plans, speculations; never love, peace, happiness."

"Oh, when we are rich, then — But I have something to ask of you; I want you to sign something; it is for a speculation which will be very profitable."

"Are you sure, my dear?"

"Oh, very sure; it is —"

Edouard was about to say, "Dufresne assured me," but he realized that was not the way to convince his wife, and he stopped himself. He took from a desk all the papers that were necessary to him, and then drew up the deed by which his wife agreed to the transfer of her stock, and tremblingly gave Adeline the pen, who, confiding and submissive, signed without even reading the deed which he put before her.

"There! that is done," said Murville, putting the papers in his pocket; "now I'll run to the exchange and complete this important matter."

He kissed Adeline and quickly left. The latter saw that it was not to see her that he had come in, but her heart excused him; she believed him to be entirely engrossed with business.

"He loves me only," she said to herself; "that is the essential thing; I must forgive his love of work and his natural desire to enrich his wife and children."

Poor Adeline! She was ignorant of the use to which he intended to put this money which he was in so much haste to realize.

CHAPTER XIII

It Was Not Her Fault

Edouard Murville returned with a triumphant air to rejoin his friend Dufresne. He was in possession of a considerable sum of money which he could dispose of as he thought fit; for he knew that his wife would not ask him to account for it, and his mother-in-law no longer mixed in his affairs.

Dufresne awaited Murville with the utmost impatience; he feared opposition on the part of Adeline, that she would decline to sign away a part of her fortune, but on seeing the precious papers in her husband's hand a smile of satisfaction played around his lips; a feeling which he endeavored to conceal also gave his features a singular expression, which would have struck anyone but Edouard. But the latter saw nothing, scarcely gave himself time to look at Dufresne, and urged him to go at once and sell some stock and get some money; and the latter hastened to do his bidding, fearing that the friend he had so easily duped might change his mind.

Adeline waited in vain for her husband's return; the day passed and he did not come in.

She thought that he had perhaps been invited to dine with some of his new acquaintances; she tried to resign herself, but that which gave her the greatest pain was Edouard's blindness in regard to Dufresne, and the indifference with which he had heard of the audacious conduct of one whom he called his friend. Dufresne's threats recurred to Adeline's mind; she thought of her husband's weakness and shuddered as she reflected that his happiness, his peace, those of his child perhaps, were in the hands of a vicious man who appeared capable of going to the greatest excess in the gratification of his passions.

Adeline remained plunged in these reflections; it was nine o'clock in the evening; sadly she was awaiting her husband's return, when she heard a violent knocking at the street door; soon she heard someone coming up stairs, approaching. It must be Edouard. She opened her door, but it was not he; it was one of the servants, who brought a letter which a stranger had left, to be given only into his mistress' hands; the man had not waited for an answer. The footman gave the letter to his mistress and departed.

Adeline tore open the envelope; she did not recognize the writing, which appeared to have been penned by a feeble and trembling hand; the signature was that of Madame Dolban.

"Why should she write to me?" said Adeline to herself. The letter read thus:—

Madame, — I am suffering greatly; for a long time I have not left my room; but I cannot wait longer to give you some very important advice. I have done you an injury, and I must endeavor to repair it. I brought to your house a man named Dufresne; alas, how I repent it! But I did not then believe him capable of doing anything contrary to delicacy. A fatal passion blinded me for a long time; now it is no longer possible to doubt the frightful truth. This Dufresne is a villain, capable of all that is base. I have many proofs of the infamy of his conduct. He has despoiled me of all I possess, but the loss of my fortune does not trouble me so much as the shame of having been his dupe. He gives himself up to gambling, debauchery, every excess, and he has the art of dissembling his frightful passions. I dare not tell you all that I know; but delay not to break the connection he has formed with your husband, or fear everything for him from the counsels of a monster for whom nothing is sacred.

WIDOW DOLBAN.

Adeline shuddered; her heart was oppressed by a secret terror; she read again the fatal letter, then raised her beautiful eyes, wet with tears, towards Heaven.

"And this is the man for whom Edouard has quarrelled with my mother; it is this man who counsels him, who is his confidant and his friend. O Heavens! what misfortunes I foresee in the future! But how can I prevent them? My husband will not listen to me; he rejects my advice; he is deaf to my prayers. But he will not be so to my tears; no, Edouard has not a bad heart; he loves me still, he will not repulse his Adeline. I will entreat him in the name of our child to have no more to do with a man who will lead him

to his ruin. This letter will be, I hope, sufficient proof; it will open his eyes, and he will sever his relations with him who has already caused me so much anxiety."

These reflections calmed Adeline's sorrow a little; she resolved to show her husband the letter immediately on his return, and decided to wait up for him. He could not be much later; the evening was already advanced; it was only necessary to have a little patience.

Poor woman! If she had known how her husband was occupied while, sad and thoughtful, she gave herself up in the silence of the night to agonies of anxiety and jealousy! You who seek to read the future would be much to be pitied if your eyes had the power to abridge space, and your ears could always hear the truth. Illusion was invented for the happiness of mortals, of which it gives them nearly as much as does hope.

The young woman sought to while away the time in making plans for the future. She looked forward with pleasure to the return of the springtime; shortly they could return to their pretty house in the country, where she had been so happy in the commencement of her married life that she flattered herself that she should recover there the happiness she had not experienced in Paris. Edouard would accompany her; he would forget all his plans, give up all this troublesome business, and break with the perfidious Dufresne. Then

nothing could disturb their happiness. Her mother would return to dwell with them. Little Ermance would flourish and would grow up under her parents' eyes, learning to respect and love them. What a charming future! How quickly the time would pass when so well employed!

Adeline's heart was moved with pleasure at the charming picture which her imagination had depicted. But the hour struck; she looked at the clock; she sighed. The vision of happiness fled, and sad reality took its place.

It is thus that the unhappy seek to elude their grief, to hide from themselves their real suffering. He who has lost his beloved cherishes her image, which is ever present to his thought; he sees her, he speaks to her, he carries himself back with her into the dear past time, and to the places where they had been most happy; he hears her voice, her soft accents, her tender avowals, which made his heart beat so deliciously; he recalls to himself the charming conversations, of which love was ever the theme; he believes that he still presses the hands of his darling between his own; he seeks her rosy lips, from whence he draws the sweetest delight. But the illusion vanishes; she is not there. Then what a frightful void! what a cruel return to life!

Adeline was agitated by these alternations of hope and fear; twenty times she went to her baby's cradle, and then returned to her place at the

window, where she anxiously watched, attentive to the slightest noise. But the rolling of cabs was the only sound that broke the stillness of the night; each time she heard it Adeline's heart beat more rapidly. It is her husband returning; yes, it is he. The cab approaches; but it passes, it does not stop.

Some hours rolled by thus; the chill of the night, the fatigue of her long watch, benumbed her feelings. Despite her anxiety to sit up for her husband, she felt she could no longer resist the sleep which overcame her, and she decided at last to go to bed; but she placed Madame Dolban's letter on her bedside table, in order that she might lay her hand on it to show it to her husband as soon as she saw him. It was to this precious letter that she trusted for peace and happiness. She lit her customary nightlight and got into bed, regretting that she could no longer resist the drowsy god; but fatigue following on anxiety had made her eyelids heavy; she fell into a deep slumber.

For an hour Adeline slept; a loud noise, caused by the overturning of a chair, awoke her with a start; she opened her eyes, but she could distinguish nothing; her nightlight had gone out. She was about to rise, but felt herself restrained by the pressure of an arm, while passionate kisses were imprinted upon her lips. Adeline knew that her husband alone had a key to her room, and that no one else could gain access to it at night. It was

Edouard, then, who had returned and was lavishing upon her his caresses as of old.

"Ah, my dear," said she, "I have awaited you for a long time; I was anxious to see you, to speak to you. If you only knew! I've had a letter from Madame Dolban. Poor woman! she is very unhappy. You will now see that I was not mistaken as to Dufresne, who has proved himself a scoundrel. He is a very dangerous man; he is, she said, capable of everything; he has ruined her; he possesses every vice, every fault. My dear Edouard, I beg you to associate no longer with that man; he will ruin you. You cannot any longer ascribe this to my fancy. Wait; the letter is there, — on my bedside table. If the lamp had not gone out I would read it to you now."

Adeline raised herself to relight the lamp, but the loving arms restrained and held her. Filled with joy at recovering her husband's love, she fell asleep, nor did she awaken until the first beams of the morning sun stole in at her windows.

Still moved by the happiness she had regained, she turned to look at her sleeping husband. A cry of horror escaped her; she trembled; she felt a sense of suffocation; her eyes remained fixed; her heart ceased to beat. It was Dufresne who was beside her! On his bosom her head had rested, to his caresses she had yielded, and in his arms she had confidingly slept!

The young woman's cry awoke Dufresne; a

treacherous smile played about his lips, and a barbaric joy glittered in the eyes with which he met the gaze of his victim, who seemed deprived of her faculty of motion and remained utterly powerless. Dufresne was about to take advantage of this and renew his horrible caresses, but a slight movement on his part aroused Adeline; she regained her faculties; she repulsed him violently, sprang out of bed, and enveloped herself in her wrapper; and the resolution of her countenance and her look of pride seemed to defy a new offence.

Dufresne paused; he regarded her for a moment in silence, then he burst into a fit of mocking laughter.

"What, madame! still this obstinacy, this affectation? In truth, after what passed between us last night you must understand that this is childish. Your pride is now very much out of place. Come, believe me; let us make peace. I assure you that your husband shall know nothing about it; it shall go no farther. And, besides, I can assure you that for his part he is now in the arms of another, and can therefore have nothing with which to reproach you."

Dufresne drew near to Adeline, who retreated from him in horror. He seized her; Adeline struggled; she seemed to be imbued with new strength, and her voice, calling Edouard, rang through the room. Dufresne paused; he released her; he felt that her cries would be heard, that

the people of the house would come; and that would derange all his plans. Despite himself he must leave Adeline; but rage, fury, flamed in the glances which he cast on her. He ran to seize Madame Dolban's letter and to show it to her who had braved his fury and defeated his new attempts.

"Here it is," he said to her, smiling ironically; "here it is, — this writing by which you hoped to obtain so great an advantage. You disdained, you rejected my love; tremble for the effects of my hate, and because of the revenge I shall take for your scornful treatment. Good-by! I take Madame Dolban's letter; from this time forth she will write no more to you."

Saying these words, Dufresne left Adeline's room precipitately.

CHAPTER XIV

The Passions Increase Rapidly When One Does Not Resist Them

Edouard had now received from Dufresne the sum of one hundred thousand francs. This money was, in truth, only a part of the product of the sale of the stock; but Dufresne, who had been pleased to retain a portion of the sum for his own purposes, falsely told Edouard that he had not negotiated all the shares for the reason that in a few days he expected to obtain a more advantageous price for the balance, and the credulous Murville, who trusted entirely to the good faith of him whom he believed his friend, received his statement in good faith, and desired the latter to complete the business when he should judge it prudent.

Entirely engrossed by his passion for the fascinating Madame de Geran, Edouard was constantly at the pretty widow's house, neglecting for her his household and wife and child, those who should have been his first thought and care. In his eyes she alone possessed those charms which satisfied his heart and his imagination. The widow received him, in fact, in her boudoir,

where it was a great favor to be admitted to a tête-à-tête. The coquette knows how to deploy all her graces and to make use of all her advantages to achieve the conquest of a young business man; she readily gains her end; weak people easily allow themselves to be seduced; a smile, a look, renders them amorous, and in this respect strong minds resemble weak ones. A clever woman who does not love manages her dupe with art; and it is only when she is certain that she can command him, govern him, that she accords her favors. Madame de Geran would have had little influence over a roué or a libertine, but with a married man who had loved no one but his wife, a coquette can easily make her way. That is why a wise woman should preferentially marry a man who is fond of the ladies, for he, at least, is not so likely to be drawn away from her by any one woman.

It is very sure that to evoke love, it is not necessary to be in love, but only to appear so. True love makes one timid, awkward, imprudent, impolitic; and how can one thus please? When one experiences love, he loses all his advantages. The young girl (let it be well understood that I mean an innocent young girl) who sees the one she loves come into the drawing-room, where she is surrounded by people, instantly becomes embarrassed, dreamy, preoccupied; the color mounts to her face; when he speaks she answers shyly; she dares not raise her eyes for fear he should

notice it. She trembles lest anyone should divine whom she is looking for; it seems to her that all eyes are fixed on her, and that everyone knows her secret. If two persons whisper, she imagines that she is the subject of their conversation. The slightest thing increases her agitation. If she is a player and someone conducts her to the piano, her fingers burn, and fail to glide over the keys. If she sings, her voice is changed, and she is afraid of giving too much expression to the words which refer to love. If she dances, she fears to dance with the one she loves, and is secretly distressed if he dances with someone else. Poor little girl! if you did not love, if he were not there, you would recover your grace, your gayety; you would perhaps be coquettish, but you would be captivated no further, and your loving friends would not laugh among themselves at your awkwardness and follies.

With a young man, it is still worse, for timidity embarrasses him, while it gives to a young girl a certain look of innocence and candor which excuses her awkwardness. But for a man who is in love, and goes and sits and sulks in a corner of the drawing-room, if the object of his flame does not glance at him tenderly enough; who sighs without speaking when seated near her; and who does not know what to say when he has an opportunity to declare his passion, — such a man, it must be confessed, is anything but admirable. In

society, everyone laughs at him, and often she who is the cause of his condition is the first to make fun of him; while a giddy fellow who is not in love, who has no feeling, who likes to plague the women, who mocks at sentiment and ridicules constancy, — a worthless fellow, in short, — easily makes himself master of a heart, and succeeds in a day, while a sensitive lover sighs vainly for many years. It is true that the worthless fellow is very lively, very forward, very enterprising in a tête-à-tête; while the poor lover — The song has it very truly: —

Ah, how foolish is one who loves!

But many of my lady readers will be angry at this, and will exclaim to themselves, "What is this, Mr. Author? You don't wish anyone to be really in love with us? How very shocking! Your principles are abominable!"

Pray calm yourselves, dear ladies; perhaps I have expressed myself badly; I do not wish that anyone should love you awkwardly or foolishly — that is all; and you must allow that in this I am right. A lover who does not know how to sigh is a very insipid article. I wish that everyone should know how to court you with wit, when one has any; with cheerfulness, because dulness and melancholy never obtain fortunate results; with secrecy, because that adds a charm to love; with ardor, because you deserve it; with vivacity, because that is not likely to displease you, and

because life is not eternal. And when one knows what he desires, I do not see the necessity of waiting for a century before asking for it, since he must perceive that it is much better to be happy today than tomorrow.

But let us leave metaphysics and love and return to Edouard, who experienced much of the latter for a woman who had never felt love for anyone, and who was not going to begin with him whom she wished to make her slave, and whom for that very reason she did not intend to love; for one does not put chains on him whom one loves; one shares them with him.

The conquest of a rich and inflammable young man like Edouard was a piece of great good fortune for Madame de Geran, who, whatever Dufresne had said, was not so severe as she wished to appear. If Murville had inquired as to the character of the young widow, he would have known that his divinity possessed a more than doubtful reputation; that she had been intimately connected with a Russian nobleman, a wealthy baronet, a contractor and an importer of cashmere shawls; that her house was a rendezvous for heedless and foolish young men, for tricksters and gamblers; and, lastly, that the name of the general of whom she said she was the widow was not to be found at the war office.

But Edouard knew nothing of all this. He believed that he had won a woman who was led to

give herself to him by the strength of the sympathy which had drawn them together; and he was vain of a victory which twenty others had obtained before him, and dazzled by her loveliness, which he thought superior to his wife's. The object of an infatuation like Edouard's has always a softer skin, a firmer throat, a tinier foot, than her rival, the lawful wife. Three parts of the time this is not true.

Edouard passed the day in admiring Madame de Geran's soft skin, white throat and tiny foot, and she allowed him to do so because she could not resist the compelling power of his love, or the voice of her own heart; at least, that was what she said when receiving his caresses. The time passed quickly in this employment, and Edouard had entirely forgotten his home and his business; nor did he perceive that day was closing, until the arrival of a dozen of the frequenters of the charming widow's house, who came every evening to play cards with her.

Edouard prepared to take his leave, but Madame de Geran would not hear of this; she wished him to stay the entire evening; besides, she must give him his revenge at écarté. He could not refuse her, and was soon seated at a card-table opposite his well-beloved, who played écarté with a charming grace, of which he was competent to judge.

When Dufresne appeared that evening at the

residence of Madame de Geran, he appeared surprised to find his friend still there. The latter was playing with a man whom he did not know. The dear widow had ceased to play because she had such unequalled good luck, and, so she said, because she did not wish to take advantage of it with Murville, who, however, was no more fortunate with the little gentleman who had taken Madame de Geran's place; he continued to lose, and would not leave the game, in the hope of indemnifying his losses.

Dufresne paused before Edouard, examining the latter in silence; his features evinced a secret satisfaction; he discovered in Murville all the symptoms of a passion which, once excited, would know no bounds; his agitated face, his swollen veins, his difficult respiration, evinced the effect which play produced upon him. However, remembering that Edouard imprudently carried a considerable sum of money, which he did not care to see pass into the hands of others, Dufresne approached him and advised him in a low tone not to play any longer; but he would not listen; Murville experienced already the ascendency of that fatal passion to which he altogether gave himself later; and, besides, stubbornness, vanity, prevented him from leaving his place.

"At least," said Dufresne, "if you will continue to play, give me your pocketbook and what still remains in it; you have sufficient money before

you — above all, should you have ill-luck. You must not risk losing so large a sum in one evening."

Had anyone else given him this advice he would not have listened to it; but so complete was Dufresne's influence over Murville that the latter gave over his pocketbook without counting its contents, from which he had already drawn several bank notes.

"Wait," said he in a faltering voice, trying to hide his mortification at thus parting with his money; "take it; here is the key of my room; wait for me at my house."

Dufresne had not repeated his advice. He had gone to Murville's house in the evening, but the servants were so used to seeing him constantly that they paid no attention to him. Dufresne, for a part of the night, had awaited Edouard's return alone in the latter's room; but, seeing at last that Edouard was not coming to bed, he had conceived the audacious project of introducing himself into Adeline's chamber while she slept. The design was easy of accomplishment; he had noticed where Edouard's key to her room was kept, and we have seen how he consummated his plans.

As to Edouard, his luck was not favorable. He continued to lose his remaining money, and had given his word for a thousand crowns in addition.

To console him, Madame de Geran kept him alone with her to supper. She assured him that

Chevalier Desfleurets, who had won his money, was an honorable man who would allow him his revenge whenever he should desire it, and that, as the luck must turn before long, he owed it to himself to wait, early or late, to recoup his loss. Other distractions helped Edouard to forget the little reverse which he had experienced; he spent the rest of that night at Madame de Geran's, and awoke in the morning poorer by ten thousand francs, having paid a little dearly for the favors he had obtained. But love does not calculate.